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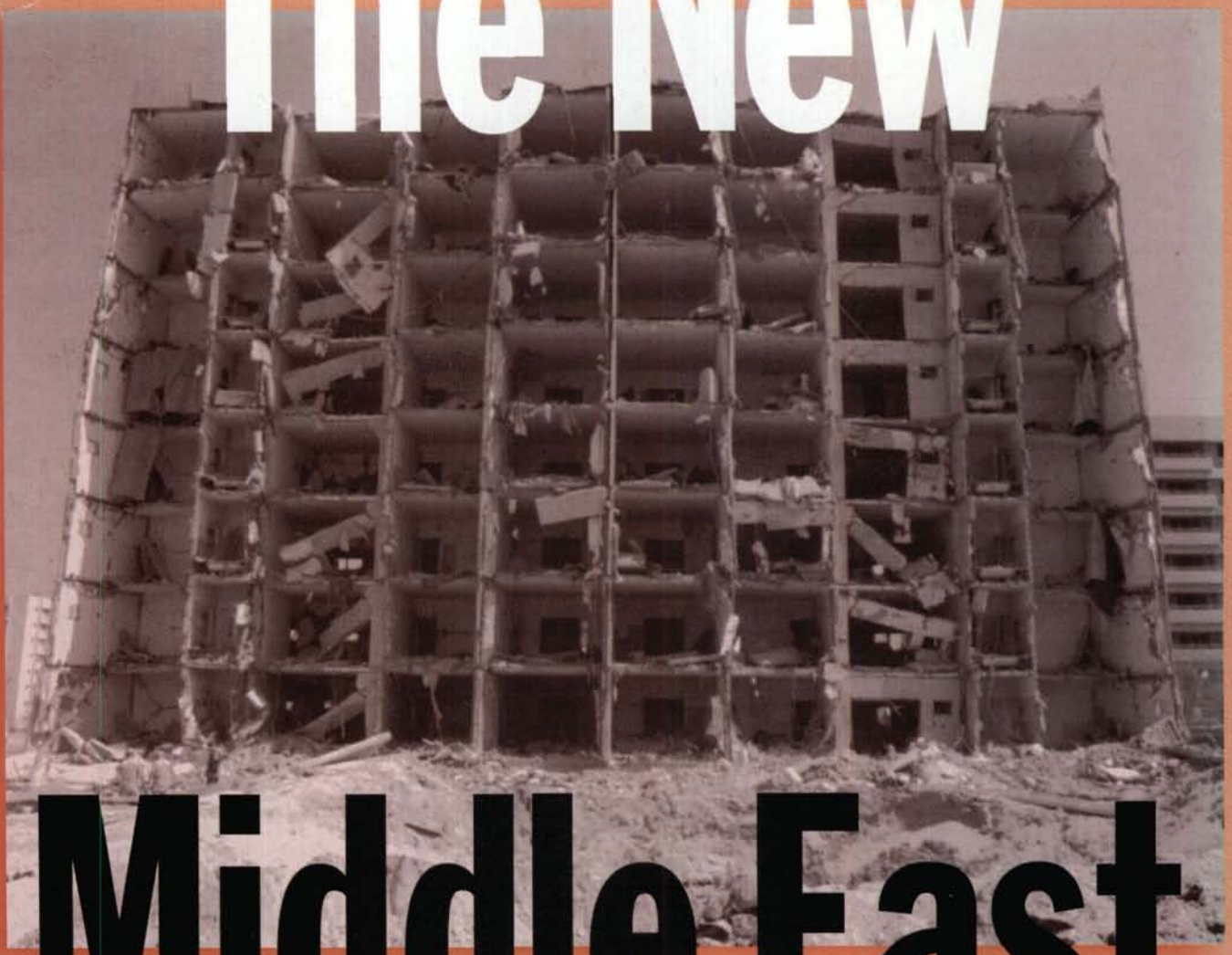

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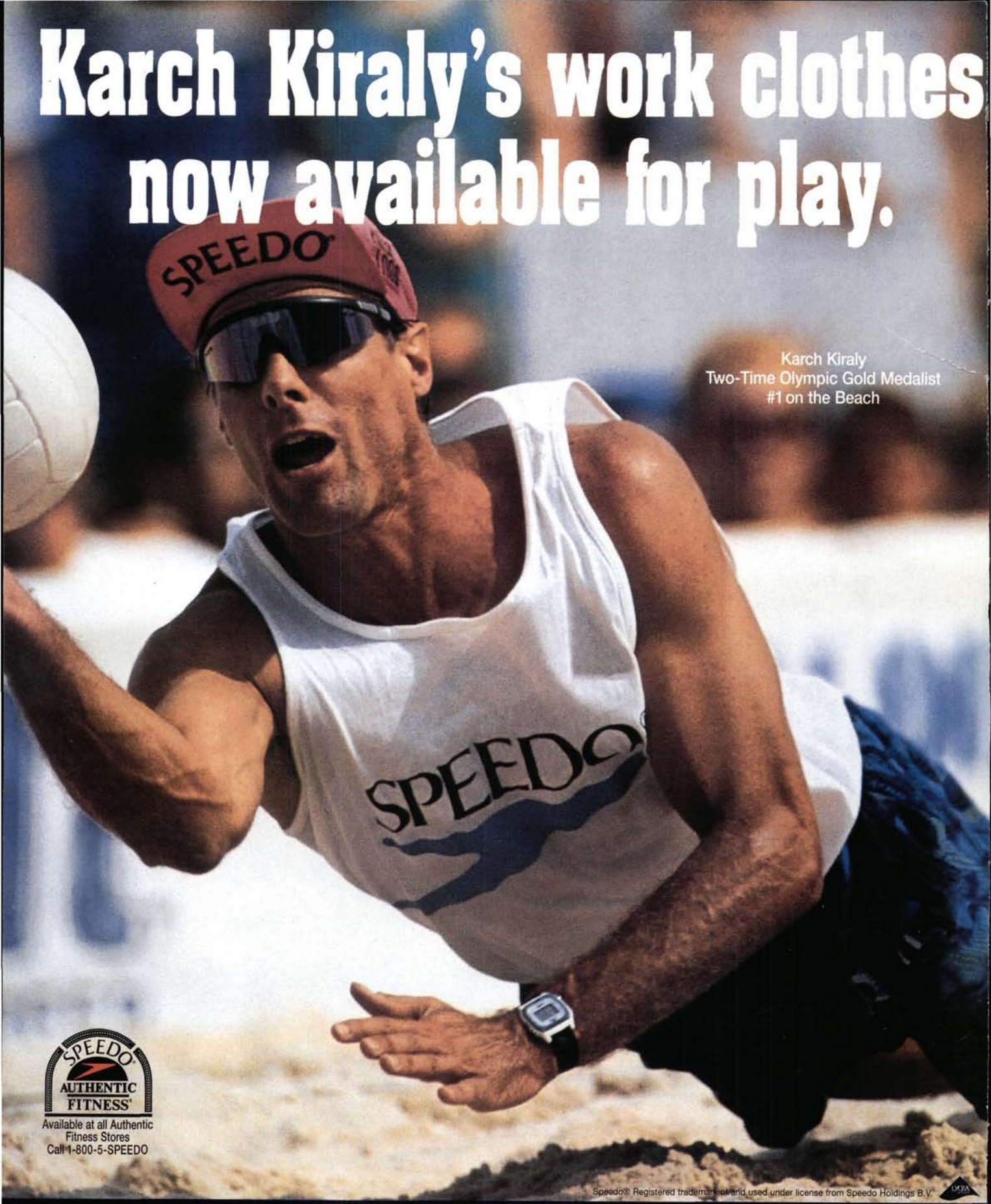

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A Weekly Journal of Opinion

JULY 29, 1996

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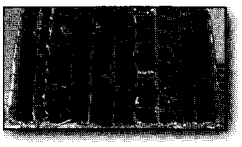

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4 **CORRESPONDENCE** Arafat, the Prophet Muhammad and TNR: an exchange &c.

6 **JOHN B. JUDIS** TRB: FALSE DAWN Clinton gives up on the wage gap.

7 **THE EDITORS** MORE MONEY FOR EVERYONE! A (partial) solution to campaign funding.

8 **NOTEBOOK** Dick Lamm rising, Random House descending &c.

9 **JONATHAN CHAIT** ON THE HILL: GUCCI GOO I was a teenage lobbyist.

10 **MASHA GESSEN** MOSCOW POSTCARD: ACT TWO Russia's virtually democratic runoff.

11 **MATTHEW MILLER** CAMPAIGN '96: COOKIE DOUGH Newt's big bake-off.

12 **MATTHEW COOPER** WHITE HOUSE WATCH: VAPID RESPONSE The Clintonites are forever being praised for their War Room acumen. So why is it missing on Whitewater?

15 **CHARLES LANE** A MAN OF GOOD INTENTIONS Warren Christopher's willingness to deal with even ruthless despots has won him much success. But does the well-meaning Secretary of State know when moral lines must be drawn?

19 **ANNA HUSARSKA** THE MEAN STREETS OF ALGERIA Journalists here live amid two constant dangers: murder by news-hungry terrorists and imprisonment by the censorious government. Not even a visitor feels safe. A report from Algiers.

23 **RONALD STEEL** THE HARD QUESTIONS: BLOWBACK Why are Americans surprised by the attack on Dhahran? It's happened plenty before.

24 **STANLEY KAUFFMANN** ON FILMS: SURVIVORS *Courage Under Fire* lacks force; *Striptease* is altogether lacking.

26 **STEPHEN OWEN** GATHERING AND SCATTERING Art, politics, and "Splendors of Imperial China."

30 **JAMES WOOD** AFTER STRANGE GODS *T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form* by Anthony Julius

34 **STUART DISCHELL** POEM *The Foreign Correspondent*

38 **JAMES M. McPHERSON** BIG LITTLE BIG HORN *The Controversial Life of George Armstrong Custer* by Jeffry D. Wert; *With Custer on the Little Bighorn* by William O. Taylor, edited by Greg Martin

42 **MARTIN PERETZ** CAPE COD DIARIST: I AM A FOOTNOTE

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CORRESPONDENCE

Prophet motive

To the editors:

In his July 8 article ("Antisocial Text"), writer Yehoshua Porath defamed the Prophet Muhammad and Islam when he stated: "Arafat repeatedly equated the Oslo agreement with the Khudaybiya [sic] agreement, which the prophet Muhammad concluded during his wars with the Quraysh tribe. Muhammad broke the agreement eighteen months after its conclusion, when the balance of power changed in his favor, and it has become a guiding precedent in Islamic law for how to deal with non-Muslim powers." It is shocking that this lie would be written by someone who claims to be a professor of history. The Prophet Muhammad never broke any treaty or pledge.

Our organization dealt with this same issue recently when another magazine made a similar allegation. In that instance, *U.S. News & World Report* had to retract its accusation of deceit on the part of the Prophet. They said, "We deeply regret any ambiguity in the language ... it was the Meccans, not the prophet Muhammad, who broke the peace of Hudaybiah of 628." We ask that your magazine also offer an apology and a retraction.

This and other forms of misinformation by respected media outlets can only contribute to a hostile atmosphere in which anti-Muslim sentiments flourish. In the past year alone, American Muslims have been the target of some 300 anti-Muslim incidents of harassment, discrimination and actual violence. A number of American mosques have been vandalized and burned.

The Quran, Islam's revealed text, states, "Yes, whoever fulfills his pledge and fears Allah much; verily, then Allah loves those who are the pious." 3:76. Also: "And fulfill [every] covenant." 17:34.

NIHAD AWAD
Executive Director, National, Council on American-Islamic Relations
Washington, D.C.

The editors reply:

Perhaps the editors at *U.S. News* revised their reading of Islamic history because they got worn down by protesters outside their office and a deluge of angry letters. We, too, have received hundreds of phone calls, letters, faxes and e-mail messages, some threatening, many of them identical to one another. But we have no intention of caving to such pressure. Nihad Awad is, after all, the former editor of the *Muslim World Monitor*, a publication of the Islamic Association for Palestine described in the prize-winning PBS documentary "Jihad in America" as a Hamas support organization. Its headlines twice-weekly praise the latest killing of Jews. And his list of "300 anti-Muslim incidents" includes the arrests of Sheik Omar Abdul Rahman and Musa Abu-Marzouk, both convicted terrorists.

This controversy is not only about politics. The legitimacy of critical scholarship, of the historical study of religion, is the deeper issue. We understand that for believers in Islam it is an insult to suggest that the Prophet broke his word. But the believers' reading of their sacred text is not the only possible reading. It may mean nothing to the believers that historians of early Islam interpret Muhammad's actions differently, and they, the believers, are free to denounce the blasphemy (and in our pages, too). And yet such scholars as Marshall Hodgson and W. Montgomery Watt paint a portrait of Muhammad behaving strategically and shrewdly in making the Treaty of Khudaybiya, in which he agreed to relent in his campaign on Mecca in 628, and then acted in disregard of that treaty in taking Mecca in 630. Indeed, the historical consensus appears to be that Muhammad was a brilliant strategist in this regard. He waited until his strength was adequate to the task and then he found a pretext—a skirmish among local allies and enemies—to attain his objective, which was the conquest of Mecca. At this magazine, we accept the authority of critical scholarship, and for this we make no apologies.

But the controversy is also about politics. The politics are not at all arcane. Yasir Arafat, in dozens of speeches, belittles what he refers to as "the Treaty of Quraysh." In his 1994 Johannesburg speech, he called it *solcha donia*, which means "despised peace," but which he translated into English as "low class." This was a speech about the Muslim future in Jerusalem: "With the help of Allah, we [will] pray very soon in Jerusalem.... The Jihad will continue and Jerusalem is for ... all the Muslim people." In a moment of hesitation, he mentions a "promise" with Rabin. Then he quickly dismisses his promise as "no more than the Treaty of Quraysh," a strategic maneuver on the path to the city he wishes to conquer. On the tape, the audience cheers. It is with Arafat's exegesis of their scripture, then, that the believers have their quarrel. Which is ironic, since he is, in these pronouncements at least, doing their work.

Con text

To the editors:

Your June 24 Notebook item shows you to be deeply confused about Alan Sokal's hoax article. You deride Roger Kimball's "failure" to detect that Sokal's article was a hoax, and imply that conservatives on the "social construction issue were as much taken in, and as much at fault, as the sorry editors of *Social Text* who accepted the piece for publication." But why should conservatives be expected to detect such a hoax, when in their view all such studies are profoundly silly? It is only the true believers in such arcana who should be held responsible for detecting imposture; to Kimball and like-minded readers, the only difference between a hoax and the real thing is that the author of the former knows he's playing the fool.

MARK HALPERN
Oakland, California

To the editors:

Roger Kimball's political views are diametrically opposed to mine, and it would indeed have been delicious to catch him falling for my parody article in *Social Text*. Alas, it didn't happen that way. Two weeks after the publication of *Social Text* and about ten days before the appearance of my article in *Lingua Franca* revealing the hoax, Kimball received an unauthorized leak from a third party. When I learned of this, I asked Kimball to refrain from using this information until my *Lingua Franca* article had become publicly available, and he agreed. As the May issue of *The New Criterion* shows, he kept his word.

ALAN SOKAL
New York, New York

College tri

To the editors:

The fawning you've lavished upon the likes of Yale ("Grads," June 17), Princeton ("Orange Crush," June 24) and Harvard ("Reunion Dues," July 1) in recent issues comes to the rescue of two particularly forlorn causes.

First, affiliates of these schools should feel obliged for your efforts to bolster their otherwise wan institutional self-esteem. Between Maggie Scarf's heart-warming tale of disaster averted at Yale's commencement, Sean Wilentz's path-breaking encounters at Princeton's graduation, and Martin Peretz's yarn about Harvard classes of yore, it seems that the spotlight has been successfully wrested from the prodigal children of Southwestern State Tech and returned to their disadvantaged brethren in the northeastern hinterland. Mission accomplished.

As for the rest of us, take heart that your patronage has rekindled what had become a receding suspicion of ivy hege-

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mony in the academic universe. Just as we were growing dangerously naïve about our prospects for receiving a quality education outside New England, your vigilance in this matter has prompted the return of a healthy national inferiority complex.

With any luck, then, TNR will soon infuse such sensitivity into its entire repertoire. Perhaps readers, having too long tolerated an abject and pervasive political correctness, will warmly receive, say, a series of paeans to India's upper castes. If nothing else, I'm sure you'll give it the old college try.

NOAM SCHEIBER
New Orleans, Louisiana

Truth and consequences

To the editors:

In James Wood's review of *Cross Channel* by Julian Barnes ("The Fact-Checker," June 24), Willa Cather is the archetype of the good fiction writer, "suggestive, stroking the not-said," while Barnes is merely "addicted to fact." What does Wood give us to show Cather's preeminence? A quote: "we had been brushed by the wing of a great feeling." (Passion? Anguish? Indolence? Who can say?)

Wood, who damns Barnes for being "a little fussy," himself fussily rehashes the old struggle between fact and truth, and comes out stoically on the side of a literature "on the verge of what is not sayable." Thus, Wood reconfirms what the endless sea of post-sayable, post-articulate literature repeatedly demonstrates: the harder one tries to write about nothing, the more likely one is to succeed.

SEAN CARPENTER
Littleton, Colorado

Primary suspect

To the editors:

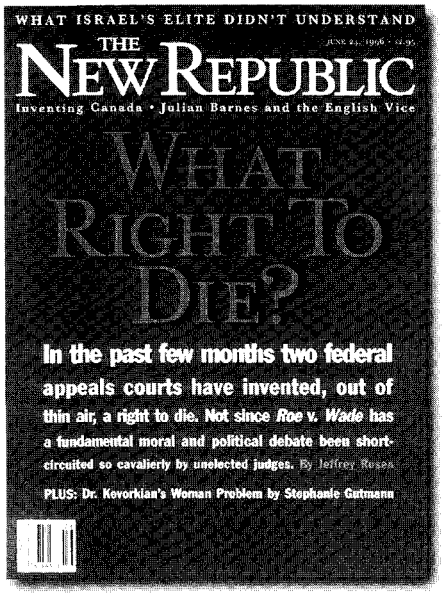
James Q. Wilson makes a good case ("Sins of Admission," June 29) in arguing that affirmative action becomes less justifiable after an applicant has enjoyed affirmative action at the undergraduate college level. He trips up, however, by concluding that the essential logical distinction between race-based and other differentiations is that the Supreme Court has held that race is a "suspect class." This longstanding legal rule, which requires a "compelling" governmental purpose to justify a race-based discrimination, does little to resolve the affirmative action debate. Using the same "suspect class" test, many critics of affirmative action find that there is no "compelling" reason to provide racial preferences, while supporters of affirmative action argue with equal vigor that societal discrimination, history, diversity and other grounds are indeed "compelling" reasons to treat blacks differently from whites. As with most "rules" of law, citing the rule does not end the argument, it only begins it.

PAUL BOUDREAUX, JR.
Takoma Park, Maryland

Liberal credit

To the editors:

The statement "Allowing only certain people to keep more of their money is really no different than giving certain people money" ("Undue Credit," July 1) was a parody of the liberal thought process, right? You didn't really mean to imply that allowing someone to keep their own money by a tax reduction is


WHAT ISRAEL'S ELITE DIDN'T UNDERSTAND
THE
NEW REPUBLIC
Inventing Canada • Julian Barnes and the English Vice
WHAT RIGHT TO DIE?
In the past few months two federal appeals courts have invented, out of thin air, a right to die. Not since Roe v. Wade has a fundamental moral and political debate been short-circuited so cavalierly by unelected judges. By Jeffrey Rosen
PLUS: Dr. Kevorkian's Woman Problem by Stephanie Gutmann

the same thing as giving someone a direct subsidy, entitlement, grant or scholarship funded by third parties even if the third parties were the taxpayers. You don't really subscribe to the theory that the government is entitled to all our earnings and we should be thankful for the crumbs it allows us to keep, do you? Mathematically the end is the same, but the means to the end are significantly different. I hope you wrote this just to see if we were awake.

DAVID R. WINTERS
Broomall, Pennsylvania

Northern exposure

To the editors:

Andy Lamey's review of Margaret Atwood's *Strange Things* ("The Wacousta Syndrome," June 24) rightly makes the point that the reading and criticism of Canadian literature is disastrously mixed up with nationalist loyalties but errs in dismissing as substandard and unimportant the Canadian literature before 1960. In fact, the opposite is nearer the truth. The quarter century before the First World War was the best period for Canadian literature and produced a great many writers (including the William Henry Drummond derided by the reviewer) who were crude and rough, or naïve and "colonial" but who (at least for the reader emancipated enough from the demands of literary criticism to be able to accept that a writer may be *often* good without being consistently good) again and again yield passages of color, conviction, warmth and immediacy. Lamey's date of 1960 really marks not one but two new developments: first, the arrival of the alleged "improved" Canadian literature and, secondly, the beginning of the government subsidization of literature—but when these two developments are viewed together the second necessarily casts doubt on the first!

ROYCE MACGILLIVRAY
Waterloo, Ontario

Bible study

To the editors:

The footnote quoted at the end of Michael Lewis's July 8 "Campaign Journal" ("Crucifixation") is not in fact included in the Bibles of most of the *New International Version* readers. Pastor Ted's Bible must be one of the speciality Bibles mentioned by Lewis earlier in the article. So, the substantial majority of those 100 million NIV readers has not seen that footnote. Moreover, most readers of the NIV are able to distinguish between the biblical text which they believe to be the literal word of God, and the editorial footnotes in their particular speciality Bibles.

Perhaps the NIV has "attracted hardly a peep of protest from homosexuals" because, far from having been "conjured into existence," the NIV is widely accepted as an accurate and faithful translation of the original Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek sources, both more readable and more accurately translated than the King James version. If they want to protest the contents of the passage, then, homosexuals must protest against the Bible, not this particular translation.

ANN J. BROOKS
Irvington, New York

The editors welcome correspondence from readers. Letters should include the writer's full name, address and telephone number; be typed double-spaced; and be held to under 200 words. Letters may be edited for space. Please address letters to: Correspondence, TNR, 1220 19th Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036.

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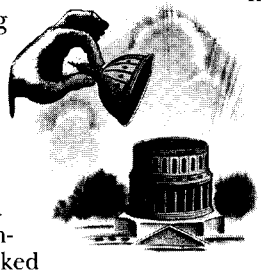
FROM WASHINGTON

False dawn

Of all his Democratic contemporaries, Bill Clinton understood most clearly the paradox of the Reagan boom. While new jobs multiplied and overall income rose, the real wages of the average American lagged, and the gap grew not only between the bottom and the top, but between what Clinton called "the forgotten middle class" and the top. In 1992, he made this paradox the focus of his economic program and his case against George Bush.



Four years later, running for re-election, Clinton has declared the problem solved. Mimicking Ronald Reagan's "morning in America" campaign of 1984, Clinton is heralding what he calls "the most solid American economy in a generation." When a reporter asked him this month about the predominance of low-paid service workers among the economy's new hires, he replied, "We believe that there is not only a stabilizing of the economy, but a stabilizing upward of the economy."

In private discussions, administration policymakers echo the president's blithe optimism. This May, pollster Geoff Garin of Peter Hart Research Associates briefed Clinton's National Economic Council on a poll showing continued public anxiety over the economy and corporate downsizing. According to participants, NEC Director Laura D'Andrea Tyson, Budget Director (now Federal Reserve Vice-Chair) Alice Rivlin and Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin dismissed the results. Rubin argued that the pollsters had not asked the right questions. But Tyson and Rivlin insisted the public perception was wrong. Tyson reportedly told Garin, "I am afraid you are just picking up something temporary, something people are reading about rather than experiencing."

In fact, today's economy suffers from the same maladies as the Reagan-Bush economy of the '80s. The U.S. is in the fifth year of an economic recovery, but real wages have increased only slightly, not enough to make up for the decline in the previous recession. And income inequality has widened. If anything, the Clinton economy is slightly weaker. Unemployment is higher than it was during the beginning of the Bush administration. Economic growth is slower than during the Reagan boom. While the budget deficit has shrunk, the trade deficit has grown.

One measure of underlying weakness is average real wages. From May 1995 to May 1996, those of private, nonsupervisory workers rose less than 1 percent. Real wages were about 4 percent lower than in May 1988, the peak of the Reagan-Bush recovery. An even better measure is *median* wages. Average-wage figures hide the fact that some workers at the top of the pay scale are earning much more, while most workers are making less. Median wages show what the large number of middle-level wage earners are making. In the latest Bureau of Labor Statistics survey, real median weekly earnings actually declined by .1 percent from the first quarter of 1995 to the first quarter of 1996. According to a forthcoming report from the Economic Policy Institute by Ruy Teixeira and Joel Rogers, median hourly wages fell a startling 3.3 percent from 1992 through 1994. This decline shows that wage inequality has grown even during the Clinton recovery.

If you doubt it, look at the study released last month by the Census Bureau of the Commerce Department, titled "A Brief Look at Postwar U.S. Income Inequality." According to the study, the ratio of income in the bottom quintile to the top quintile went from 10.2 in 1968 to 12.5 in 1992 and to 13.6 in 1994—an enormous leap in the first Clinton years. From 1992 to 1994, average real income remained constant among the bottom three quintiles, while shooting up among the highest fifth and the top 5 percent.

Wage inequality probably hasn't increased as dramatically in the last two years of Clinton's term. As unemployment has fallen, labor shortages have undoubtedly forced up some workers' wages. Were the current recovery (still flaccid by standards of the last four decades) to continue for another four years and pick up speed, then wages at the bottom might rise significantly. But that is not likely to occur.

First, there are political obstacles. Alan Greenspan, whom Clinton just reappointed to a six-year term, won't let unemployment drop much lower. The inflation-obsessed Federal Reserve chair-

continued on page 41

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THE NEW REPUBLIC

JULY 29, 1996

MORE MONEY FOR EVERYONE!

After the Senate two weeks ago blocked yet another attempt to limit campaign spending, Majority Leader Trent Lott lamented that it's "very hard to get campaign finance reform in an election year." Yes, it's hard, especially when the majority leader himself supports a filibuster that fatally dooms the bill—as Lott did.

Nothing inspires as much cynicism about American politics as does its financing. This year may set a new high-water mark. Bob Dole has been campaigning full steam for weeks, despite probably having reached his legal spending limit weeks, even months ago. And according to Bob Woodward's new book, *The Choice*, President Clinton has personally overseen $25 million worth of Democratic Party ads on his behalf, violating the spirit, if not the letter of the law. And why not? The penalty, if levied at all, is a small fine long after the contest is over. Worse, the day after Lott and the Republicans killed the latest reform bill, the Supreme Court joined the pig pile by ruling in *Colorado Republican Committee* v. *Federal Election Commission* that political parties can spend without limit on behalf of individual candidates—in other words, ensuring that the shell game of "soft money" continues unchecked.

The cumulative weight of these events leaves America's 20-year-old experiment in restricting candidate spending exposed as a sham. While soft money makes a mockery of federally subsidized presidential campaigns, congressional races are in even worse shape, with the candidates entirely at the mercy of private interests. Yet conservatives continue to stymie efforts for public financing of House and Senate campaigns. "The political process, in fact, is underfunded," observed House Speaker Newt Gingrich last year, in a line since adopted by *The Wall Street Journal*, the *Weekly Standard* and other centers of conservative opinion.

Newt's formulation misleadingly conflates two things: the arguably enlightening impact of money spent *by* candidates and the unarguably corrupting impact of money spent *on* candidates (by individuals and especially business interests). If Newt and company are right and American campaigns really are underfunded, then limits on political contributions—a key part of our campaign laws—are a bad idea. But using government resources to help finance elections—the other element of the current system, which liberals typically seek to augment—becomes all the more necessary. It's this latter half of the equation that Newt and Co. won't accept.

It's time to concede that there's no way Republicans are about to accept spending caps. The thirst for partisan advantage is stronger than ever. Before November 1994, business split its donations between its natural allies, the Republicans, and the party in power, the Democrats. Congressional Democrats, believing their majority to be perpetual, chose to reap the benefits of incumbency rather than overhaul the system. But since November 1994 the big money—except from unions and trial lawyers—has had little reason to support Democrats, and the GOP leadership intends to leverage its financial edge into a permanent majority.

Where in 1976 the Supreme Court, equating campaign donations with political speech, deemed mandatory spending limits unconstitutional, today even *voluntary* limits seem doomed. The filibuster that Trent Lott both led and lamented was final proof. The bill it killed, proposed by Arizona Republican John McCain, would have offered candidates free TV time and mailings as an incentive for them to accept voluntary spending restrictions. McCain's GOP colleagues objected most vocally to the spending caps.

But what if reformers detached their perennial efforts at public financing from their perennial efforts at tightening spending limits? What if McCain ditched the new limits—or even, to help win over the right, raised the existing caps on donations—and just pushed for free mailings and TV? Subsidizing campaigns can't drive out special interest money, but it can reduce its influence. To win a seat in Congress, you don't have to spend more money than your opponent. You just need to spend enough to get your message out. Challengers don't need to match the money spent by incumbents, they just need to reach a threshold where they become visible to voters. Higher levels of campaign expenditures reach a point of diminishing returns, as Michael Huffington's failed $28 million campaign for a California Senate seat in 1994 showed. If every candidate began with substantial free air time and mailings, extra donations would be gravy. And nobody's speech would be impeded. How about it, Newt? •

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NOTEBOOK

TO THE SLAUGHTER? The 1996 primary season is not over. The sudden race between former Colorado Governor Richard Lamm and Ross Perot to carry the standard of Perot's Reform Party, may alter this year's presidential campaign. If the party picks Perot, it will simply provide another vehicle for his megalomania. But Lamm—who unlike other would-be third party candidates Colin Powell and Bill Bradley has a detailed agenda rather than just a celebrity persona—could elevate this year's idealess campaign and build the groundwork for a relevant new party. Some will ask whether Lamm's candidacy will hurt Bill Clinton electorally, and while that's possible, it's also possible it might *change* Clinton's candidacy. Clinton, in sharp contrast to 1992, is running this year on almost no agenda at all. Hearing Lamm's litany of rarely uttered truths—providing primary care for everyone means rationing emergency treatment for the old and sick, America needs a significantly higher gas tax, Social Security must spur private saving—might awake something in Bill Clinton's wonkish but seemingly fossilized mind. Lamm might also show Clinton and the Democrats that it is, in fact, politically feasible to reduce the budget deficit without cutting needed programs for the poor, Gingrich-style, but by cutting unneeded subsidies to wealthier Americans. There is much about Dick Lamm that we still do not know, and there are other things—his desire to reduce legal immigration, his willingness to endorse Ross Perot if he loses—that are disturbing. And we hope he won't descend into apocalyptic moralism. But watching him on his first days on the stump—passionate about policy dilemmas that make other politicians squirm, able to think for himself rather than repeating clichés, and as clear about why he wants office as that he wants it—is like a watching a Bill Clinton that most people in Washington can barely remember. For those disillusioned with this president, and depressed by the quality of the 1996 debate so far, Dick Lamm is a wake up call. Perhaps he will be so for Bill Clinton as well.

PUTTING THE RANDOM BACK IN RANDOM HOUSE: Every once in a while America's culture industry devises something so awful, so amoral, so callously commercial that we are all, suddenly, in a fit of sanity, reactionaries. Last week Maureen O'Brien of *The New York Post* reported that Random House is planning a series of fast tabloid books about sensational crimes ... for children. A spokeswoman for the publishing house told O'Brien that these books will be "exposes of the most provocative, frightening, other worldly and until now 'adult' current events." We're not sure what "other worldly" means, but the meaning of "until now 'adult' " is perfectly clear. Random House is preparing to pander to kids. The same spokeswoman admitted that "if another Jeffrey Dahmer and Amy Fisher were to come along and make the news, that's precisely the type of crimes that we would want to cover in these books." (See Amy fire. See Jeffrey chew.) The series is called "Headliners!" The first volume is called *Unabomber: Handled With Care.* Another shrewd publicity person at Random House did us the favor of sending along the book's first three chapters. They are special. Chapter One tells of a botched explosion on a Boeing 727 carrying seventy-two people: "The bomber made a mistake when he used smokeless gunpowder," the book explains to the children, "instead of a more powerful explosive, such as dynamite. Gunpowder makes for a very weak explosion." Also, "the bomber went to a lot more trouble than he had to. He *could* have bought a lot of the stuff at Radio Shack." (*Cool.*) Chapter Two furnishes its young readers with a history of "modern criminal profiling." Chapter Three begins: "While the Mad Bomber terrorized New York City, a young man named Ted Kaczynski was growing up on Chicago's South Side." And so on. We wish the publishers luck in hell. With books like this, who needs movies?

TANNEN BOMB: In her continuing quest to plug all issues, public and private, into the simplistic template of gender difference, Deborah Tannen has struck again. Defending Hillary Clinton from critics and comics who have seized on her relationship with self-proclaimed "sacred psychologist" Jean Houston, Tannen ascribes the barbs to a double standard. When President Clinton met with motivational authors Anthony Robbins and Stephen Covey, she claims, "these meetings didn't come in for much ridicule." No? *The Washington Post Magazine* called Robbins "a 6-foot 7-inch 'peak performance coach' with size 16 feet and a head that looks like something found on Easter Island." *The Chicago Tribune* said Covey grew rich "fooling big companies into thinking they should pay legal American money to have someone tell their employees to 'stop blaming others' because 'you are the programmer of your life' and you should 'listen to understand.' " *Newsweek* ran the mocking headline, "GETTING IN TOUCH WITH YOUR INNER PRESIDENT." So much for a double standard. Besides, Covey and Robbins didn't spend night after night in the White House, gain the president's lasting personal confidence and friendship and collaborate with him on a best-selling book. Maybe Tannen wants to vindicate these crackpot methods of corporate management because it's a trade that she, with her last book, *Talking 9 to 5*, is coming perilously close to joining. Or maybe she just doesn't understand.

DECISIONS, DECISIONS:

Poll: Undecided voters prefer Dole

—*The Boston Globe,* July 1

(Thanks to David Rozenson of Newton, Massachusetts.)

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ON THE HILL

GUCCI GOO

By Jonathan Chait

In a gleaming marble building across the street from the Capitol, an assembly of Washington lobbyists has gathered to learn the meaning of friendship. "According to *Webster's Dictionary*," explains Wright Andrews, president of the American League of Lobbyists, "a 'friend' is 'a person whom one knows well and is fond of' or 'a person on the same side of a struggle' ... or 'one who is not an enemy or foe' or 'an ally' ... or 'a close acquaintance' ... or 'a supporter or sympathizer.' After reading that, I discovered that I have a lot of friends in Washington, indeed." Andrews, who looks and talks like his former boss Sam Nunn, looks up and smiles.

The crowd of buttoned-down Beltwayites smiles back. They've got lots of friends in Washington, too. After all, it's their job to make friends with policymakers. And, lucky for them, last year's law banning lobbyists from giving gifts or meals to congressmen and their staff just happens to make an exception for friends (which is like outlawing murder except against personal enemies).

The only other catch is, you can't put gifts on the company tab. But a bit of brainstorming solves that problem. "Suppose you were making $100,000 a year," one of the co-panelists asked, "and your employer increased your salary to $150,000 so that you could afford to buy *a lot* more lunches. What do you do then?" Andrews says, "Don't get caught."

Last year, Congress unanimously passed a law forcing lobbyists to register with the government and curtailing their fabled generosity. "We have eliminated every loophole we can get our hands on," gushed Michigan Senator Carl Levin. Even the lobbyists seemed to be chastened. "The American League of Lobbyists," wrote Andrews, in a *USA Today* op-ed after the vote, "has long advocated reforms like those passed this week." In newspapers, that is. Behind closed doors, "he was arguing against it," recalls a Levin aide.

But, quietly, the flaks are striking back. Since the law went into effect, Washington lobbying firms have been holding seminars explaining the finer points of the legislation for their panicky colleagues. This particular lesson, called "Real World Compliance" (wink, wink), was convened by the American League of Lobbyists, an umbrella organization whose only stance on policy questions is that they should all be heavily lobbied. One of the panel moderators calls it a "teach-in on lobbying." Exchange tie-dyes for pinstripes, free love for free lunches and anti-establishment idealism for its polar opposite and you've got the picture: an assembly of experts imbuing an audience with the same contempt for lobbying reform that their '60s counterparts held for the Vietnam War.

The hated reform has two parts: lobbying disclosure and a gift ban. The first means that anyone who spends a certain amount of time lobbying has to register with the Clerk of the House or the Secretary of the Senate, who will refer violators to the U.S. Attorney. Designating a specific office to police the new law sounds stern enough. But Senate Secretary Kelly Johnston, the man charged with uncovering violations in the Senate, isn't exactly Eliot Ness. A tanned, impeccably coiffed Washington operator, his résumé includes jobs with the U.S. Senate Republican Policy Committee, the National Republican Senatorial Committee, as well as several congressional offices. In other words, he's just the sort of person likely to one day become a lobbyist. Lobbyists have little to fear from Johnston. They know this because he was at the seminar telling them so.

Johnston begins his presentation by explaining the new law in the guilt-tinged tone of voice of a lenient parent begging his child to accept a necessary punishment. After he explains that the law requires them to list the specific sub-agencies they lobby, the audience groans. "I'm not trying to be punitive here," Johnston stammers contritely. He then assures the crowd that his office has no capacity to investigate violations. And, even if a third party reports a transgression to them, "We're trying to be forgiving. We're here to help. We're not even close to reporting anyone to the U.S. Attorney." After the break is a session on the gift ban, the section of the bill congressmen were most proud of. "Congress will no longer be wined and dined," crowed Democrat John Bryant of Texas when the bill passed. But Andrews is not going to let the ban spoil his evening plans. "We're learning to operate under the gift rules," he assures the crowd. Andrews zeroes in on a provision allowing congressmen to enjoy "personal hospitality" on a lobbyist's personal property as long as it's for a "non-business purpose." Andrews pauses. "I'll let everyone figure out why you're doing it, if it's business or not."

During a break, the woman sitting to my left confides that she is not a lobbyist at all but a lawyer sent by her firm to attend the session. (Just as a car thief only flaunts his occupation when surrounded by child molesters, a lawyer only volunteers her profession proudly in a convention of lobbyists.) Sensing that perhaps I was a fellow outsider—I am the youngest attendee as well as the only non-suited man—she asks me my business. I mumble that I recently moved to the area and am interested in learning about lobbying. "You don't have any particular cause, you just want to get involved in lobbying?" she asks incredulously. I nod. She flashes a brief look of abject disgust and turns away. I can't really blame her. •

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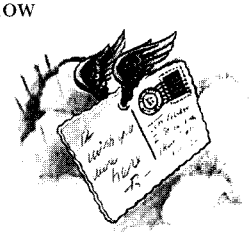
MOSCOW POSTCARD

ACT TWO

By Masha Gessen

There is a self-congratulatory mood about Moscow these days. Ever since the July 3 runoff election handed Boris Yeltsin a second term, celebration has had the embarrassingly insistent quality of a C-student boasting about his first A. The gist of much of the jubilant commentary, including the president's television address, is roughly this: the world said we weren't capable of a truly free and open election, but we've done it. We even had two rounds, just like a real democracy.

In a country obsessed with its "unique" destiny, it is bizarre to see Russians boasting about how closely their election resembled other countries'. It speaks to a great national inferiority complex, a desperate desire to be like the world's good students. Like any imitation, however, Russia's election represented not only the sincerest form of flattery but the shallowest sort of likeness. It is democracy as a lifestyle statement, the culmination of a five-year struggle to attain the look and feel of direct participation. No one here pretends it goes any deeper than that.



In the fall of 1995 President Boris Yeltsin kicked off the election season by trying to create an ersatz two-party system, just like in the great democracies. He personally appointed the heads of two moderate parties, one, the Ivan Rybkin Bloc, left of center, the other, Victor Chernomyrdin's Our Home Is Russia, right of center. But this plan for the instant modernization of Russian politics foundered. Our Home Is Russia took only 10 percent of the vote in last December's parliamentary elections, the Ivan Rybkin Bloc won no seats at all, and the immoderate Communists won a plurality. Still, Yeltsin's plan set the tone for this summer's presidential campaign, which was stage-managed by politicians and journalists with an interest in the appearance of a free, democratic process, and in the re-election of Boris Yeltsin.

After the government's parliamentary setback, most observers thought Yeltsin would cancel the presidential contest. But they underestimated the new nomenklatura's ability to manipulate the democratic form. Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov, one of the country's most powerful politicians, even appointed and registered his own rival. He explained to journalists that, since the constitution banned single-candidate contests but no one had yet registered to run against him, his move proved his desire to hold free, fair and legal elections in the city. He won with more than 90 percent of the vote.

In the spring the Yeltsin campaign engineered a more complex version of the same maneuver. A group of Yeltsin ideologues essentially took over the campaign of diamond-in-the-rough General Alexander Lebed. For months they toiled to perfect Lebed's law-and-order image, feeding him intelligent but militant monologues that he recited during TV appearances arranged by journalists who either supported or were plainly working for the Yeltsin campaign. After the election's first round, when Lebed joined the Yeltsin administration, the acting president's campaign did nothing to discourage reports of the tight relationship between the two campaigns. To them, the Lebed scheme showed the president as the cunning and resourceful politician that he is. Deceiving the voters through a puppet campaign was not an issue.

Neither the rejuvenation of Yeltsin's image nor the creation of Lebed's would have been possible without the unflagging support of the pro-democracy media, including the sole national television channel not controlled by the state. The president of Independent Television joined Yeltsin's campaign staff. Other media outlets, including the influential daily *Izvestia*, a liberal newspaper that had lambasted Yeltsin since the Chechnya war began, handed themselves over to the president, too. A communist victory would probably have cost *Izvestia* its sizable government subsidies. So it mobilized the liberal intelligentsia to write group letters in support of Yeltsin. When seven of the paper's most famous readers, including the human rights activists Sergei Kovalyov and Yelena Bonner, tried to publish an opposing response, *Izvestia* refused to print it. With democracy in danger, the liberal paper could not afford the luxury of remaining an open forum.

In Sergei Kovalyov's Parliament office, which only Parliament staff and accredited journalists can enter without hard-to-obtain special permission, there hangs a schedule of his district office hours: three locations are open for two hours each on the fourth Thursday of every month. That means Kovalyov's aides speak with his Moscow constituents a total of six hours a month—probably an accurate measure of the level of democratic participation Russia has attained.

"I think now that the election is over, they'll start printing me again," Kovalyov said, referring to the liberal media. A leading critic of the war in Chechnya, Kovalyov opposed Yeltsin right through the second round. Still, he seemed relieved, perhaps even a little proud: Russia had averted Communist rule using, if only formally, a democratic process. We live in the postmodern age. Content will follow form.

MASHA GESSEN is a staff writer at *Itogi*, a weekly newsmagazine in Moscow.

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COOKIE DOUGH

By Matthew Miller

"At heart, I am still a happy four-year-old who gets up every morning hoping to find a cookie ..."
—Newt Gingrich, *To Renew America*

June 26 is another tropically humid Atlanta morning, and in Georgia's Democratic Party headquarters Richard Gephardt's faxed "message of the day" wilts in the in-box, unread. Michael Coles, the cookie chainstore mogul out to unseat Newt Gingrich in Georgia's sixth congressional district, has called a press conference to unveil his first television ad. It's an underwhelming, vaguely depressing scene: a tiny conference room in a nondescript office with a VCR in the corner, a pseudo-event staged to get political reporters to write about an advertisement. But two things stand out. First, on the table, as at all Coles's campaign stops, are his cookies: original chocolate chip (accounting for 55 percent of sales), plus peanut butter and macadamia nut (tied for number three, behind chocolate chewy). Second, between now and the July 9 primary, Coles will spend an astonishing $500,000 on advertising and direct mail, nearly double what Newt's last Democratic opponent spent in his entire campaign.

Except for their age—Gingrich is 53, Coles, 52—incumbent and challenger are a study in contrasts. At 15, the age when, according to Newt's writings, he felt summoned to his historical mission of protecting our way of life from the Soviet threat, Coles was holding down three part-time jobs to help his bankrupt dad pay the bills. Cheerleading for free markets and small business is Gingrich's "message." For Coles, it's been his life. Coles built his Great American Cookie Company from scratch, turning an $8,000 investment in 1977 into about 400 stores today, with sales last year reaching $86 million. Now he's bringing his entrepreneur's competitive drive—plus a net worth he pegs at $60 million—to a race deemed an impossible long shot.

But Newt is less entrenched than he appears at first glance. Gingrich's old southwest Atlanta constituency was redrawn after the 1990 Census, prompting him to carpetbag north in search of safer fights. For good reason. In 1990, after twelve years in the House, Gingrich spent $1.5 million to hold onto his old district by just 974 votes. In a GOP primary fight in the new district in 1992, Gingrich again barely squeaked by against a poorly funded unknown.

Last December, Democratic polls found that, despite the sixth's general GOP tilt (Republicans outnumber Democrats two to one), voters here hardly amounted to a Gingrich fan club. Newt's job performance rating was 51 percent positive, 47 percent negative. Big majorities agreed that he "talks too much," is "arrogant" and "too extreme." Throw in voters' widespread opposition to Newt's crusade to limit Medicare spending, and you begin to see how deep-pocketed Coles decided he was viable. Besides, uphill battles don't daunt him. Twenty years ago, naysayers told him his business wouldn't work. That same year, doctors told him he'd never walk unaided after a terrible motorcycle accident. Coles not only fought back, he became a national cycling champion. Now, when it comes to America's most powerful Speaker in decades, Cole says, "He's just a guy."

In the car between campaign stops, Coles explains that he got tired of hearing "a guy who's never had a private sector job in his life" preach the virtues of small business. "This is a guy who's clearly been at the taxpayers' trough his entire career," Coles says. "He obviously has no understanding of risking capital, creating jobs, building a business. He's totally disconnected from all this." Coles blames Gingrich's pigheadedness for last winter's lost chance for a budget deal, calling it "the most cavalier approach to negotiation I've ever seen." He's offended that the man leading a budget-cutting revolution has hiked his own office spending 50 percent. Turning Newt's anti-Washington rhetoric against him, Coles vows he'll serve six years and come home, donate his salary to charity and refuse any pension.

When I ask if there's anything about Gingrich that Coles admires, he pauses. Finally he concedes that the Speaker is a "smart guy." But, he adds: "I think that Newt is so divisive that it outweighs anything about him that I might admire in him. He continues to amaze me in the way he polarizes people." Coles says he's seen this divisive style get corporate piranhas to the top, too. Once they arrive, their scorched-earth style undermines their ability to lead. "I've seen a zillion guys like Newt in the private sector," he says, the self-made man dismissing the self-appointed agent of history. "They're flash-in-the-pan guys."

On policy, Coles is an economic conservative. His top fiscal priority would be to strip out corporate subsidies, such as those favoring mining and timber interests. "No one's subsidizing cookies," he quips. Of course, that won't fix our long-term spending woes, which brings Coles to Medicare and Social Security, where the newcomer, like his political elders, finds ambition and intellectual integrity at odds. Surprisingly, Coles's first television ad didn't mention Medicare at all. But his direct mail unfairly attacks Gingrich's plan to "slash" the program, while pledging that he'll "shield" Medicare and Social Security benefits. Are they really off limits?

Coles's first instinct is to evade, touting his recent endorsement from the National Committee to Preserve Social Security. Then he tries to turn the con-

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versation back toward corporate welfare. When pressed, he says, "It's not as if this [Medicare] is a program that people have not paid into. They paid taxes into it, they've been promised it." But no one was promised today's big multiples back on what they paid in, were they? After more tapdancing, Coles eventually says, yes, the baby boom's retirement means the programs will need careful revamping, adding that there are "certainly ways to do some type of means-testing." "Social Security was never set up to be a retirement program," he continues. "It was set up to be a safety net. We need to talk about that." Coles himself, however, seems less than eager to do so.

In the lunchroom of the Roswell Senior Center, Coles's Democratic primary opponent is even less worried about such pesky truths. "I'm the only candidate," booms the heavy Southern drawl, "who has pledged not to cut Medicare one red cent." "Cliff Oxford," concludes Cliff Oxford, clearly a graduate of the Bob Dole School of Rhetoric, "is against that." Oxford tries to scare thirty-five elders at seven lunch tables for a few more minutes before sitting down. It's a tough crowd. Masks of skepticism and boredom are etched on faces that have seen, and heard, it all.

Yet when Coles steps up to speak he connects. Coles is short, gregarious, confident. You can imagine the inspiring pep talks he gives his cookie team. He peppers his speech with the phrase "as a businessperson...," a preface invoked both as a credential and as a crutch against his insecurity in this new arena. Coles manages to come across as a sincere, ordinary guy. "No matter what level of success I've achieved," he tells the group, "it wasn't that long ago that Donna and I worried about making the mortgage payment."

One table is ready to sign up. "If Newt keeps it up," a lively 93-year-old woman enthuses, "he won't get reelected. The seniors want to be protected." When I say younger generations are worried these benefits are unsustainable, her friend interrupts. "Roosevelt made us a promise. Yes, it has to be revised. But not the way he [Gingrich] wants to."

For now, Gingrich dismisses Coles, who won his primary handily, as a "liberal millionaire" out to buy himself a seat in Congress in the Kennedy-Rockefeller tradition. Tony Blankley, Newt's Washington flak, says Gingrich "hasn't paid much attention" to the race. But Gingrich's local spokesman says Coles's cash "has Newt concerned," and insists, without being asked, that he won't tie their man down in the district and short-circuit his work on behalf of other GOP candidates. Though the pros say that diverting Newt would be victory enough for Coles, I'm not so sure. The experts didn't see Tom Foley's fall coming, either. In 1994, Ben Jones, a Gephardt-style liberal with little money, pulled within ten points of Gingrich with two weeks to go before Newt blitzed the airwaves and took all the uncommitted voters. Come that time this year, the cookieman's ovens will just be firing up. •

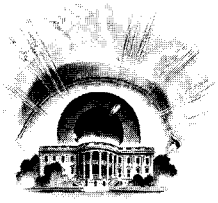
WHITE HOUSE WATCH

VAPID RESPONSE

By Matthew Cooper

On May 28, the guilty verdicts returned in the trial of Jim and Susan McDougal and Jim Guy Tucker, Arkansas' sitting governor, caught the White House by surprise, although they shouldn't have. Even though the jury had deliberated for over a week, top White House aides waited until the last minute to come up with a plan for how to respond in case the jury offered up multiple, devastating convictions, which it did.

As they scrambled, the most immediate question facing the president's top aides that spring afternoon was whether Clinton himself should say anything publicly about the verdict. George Stephanopoulos, the president's senior adviser, and Michael McCurry, Clinton's press secretary, went to Chief of Staff Leon Panetta to suggest that the president make a public statement before the cameras. McCurry advised a less formal setting, perhaps the driveway in front of the West Wing where White House visitors often speak to the press. Unlike the briefing room, Clinton wouldn't be in as hostile an environment. And the driveway is less formal, thus downplaying the importance of the event. Panetta agreed.



The three men then presented their proposal to the president. Clinton said that he was reluctant to appear before the press without knowing whether the jurors had believed his story, something they wouldn't know for several hours, until after the press interviewed the jurors as they came off the stand. Clinton, though, was persuaded it was better to get some response out now rather than letting the story fester. Stephanopoulos called Hillary Rodham Clinton to ask if she concurred in the idea of a public statement. She did. Within a few minutes, the president was in the driveway.

There's been an assumption in Washington that everything the Clinton White House does is planned, premeditated, politically calibrated by polls, focus groups and consultants to the tiniest millimeter. To some degree that is true. The president's daily retinue of proposals—endorsing local curfews one day, proposing more vigorous meat inspection the next—is part of a larger "arc," as one aide puts it, designed to show the president as in tune with the values of families and willing to exercise power and moral leadership. The strategy polls extremely well with the married couples who

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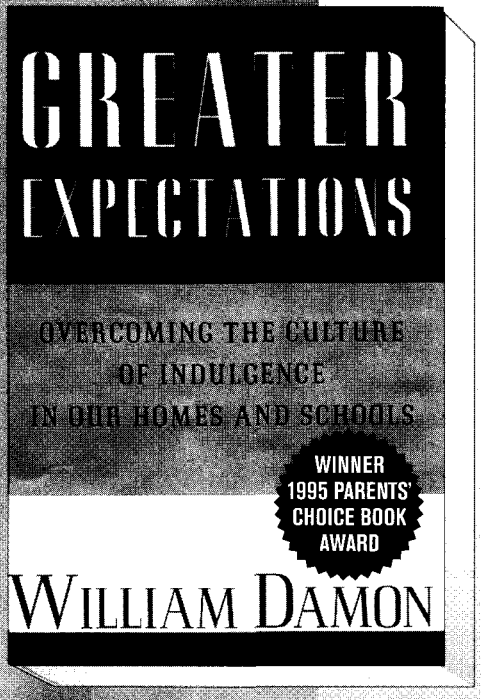
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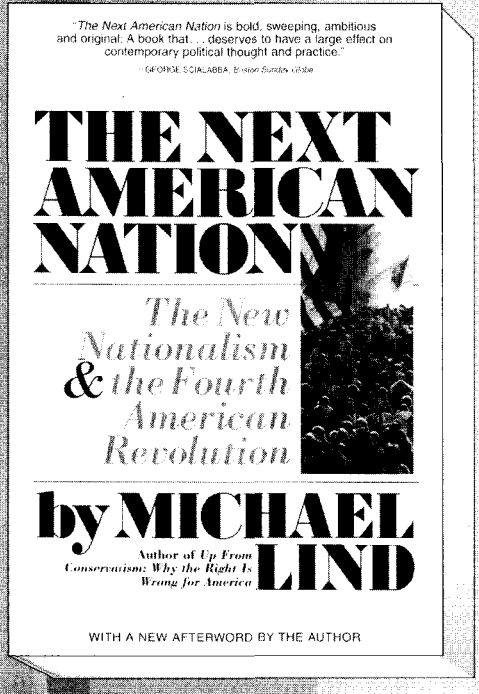
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are the swing voters sought by strategist Dick Morris, pollster Mark Penn and Clinton's 1996 team. But when it comes to Whitewater and the other White House "scandals," there is no master plan at the White House, no big strategy, no War Room, no action other than reaction. Rapid response? More like vapid response. The meetings like the one on the day of the McDougal-Tucker verdicts are hastily convened. There is nothing on the order of, for instance, the well-honed plan the administration used to garner support for the North American Free Trade Agreement. With so many flaps behind them, you'd think they'd get organized. They haven't, as the response to Filegate showed.

This lack of organization explains why the White House can't bring its shipshape policy process to bear on the crises that erupt. There have, of course, been some successes. The utter repudiation of the book *Unlimited Access* by former FBI agent Gary Aldrich was a boon to spirits at the White House. Its lurid right-wing fantasies—gay sex in the West Wing, a deal to hand domestic policy to Hillary in exchange for her silently standing by her husband's infidelities—broke down under even modest scrutiny. On the other hand, their inadequate, feeble explanations for how some 900 FBI files wound up at the White House continue to irritate. The cumulative effect of all these scandals is grating nerves at the White House, including the president's. Were it not for the utter incompetence of the Dole campaign—bashing Katie Couric, flip-flopping on guns, hairsplitting over abortion—Clinton would be hemorrhaging support. And he knows it. "I'm over there a lot," one Clinton Cabinet secretary told me. "And you can tell that the barometric pressure is rising."

To contain the damage, floating meetings of sorts have developed in the White House to try to figure out how to handle the daily barrage of Whitewater-related news. But it's ad-hoc, spontaneous, occasional. Stephanopoulos and McCurry are among its members as are the White House Counsel Jack Quinn, Associate Counsel Jane Sherburne and Mark Fabiani, another associate counsel who has the unenviable task of being the Whitewater spokesman.

Fabiani and a few aides are the only full-time Whitewaterites in the White House. He has some experience in managing the press when it's in a feeding frenzy. As chief of staff to former Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley, Fabiani coordinated the response to a slew of ethics charges raised against the Bradley administration. Then in his early 30s, Fabiani was a kind of West Coast Stephanopoulos, repeatedly referred to in flattering profiles as a "boy wonder" Harvard Law grad and disparaged in critical accounts as hyper-ambitious, sporting a slicked-back hairstyle like that of Michael Douglas in the movie *Wall Street*. Fabiani has since traded his gel in for a drier look.

In his fourth-floor office in the Old Executive Office Building, peppered with pictures of his idol, boxer Muhammad Ali, Fabiani offers the White House line on the FBI affair, doing so in the "rope-a-dope" style Ali made famous, taking punches on the ropes, holding back and then firing away. "The facts appear to suggest that there was a huge fuckup," Fabiani says of the FBI files; like many in the White House, he counsels that not all of the facts of the FBI file flap may be unearthed. But he jabs that the Republicans have gone too far on the matter. "I think the Republicans on the files are stymied. They could have sold this as rank incompetence, instead they talked about an enemies list and now they can't prove it." Fabiani acknowledges that "it was a big mistake to put [Livingstone] there" in charge of White House security. No one, it seems, has a kind word for the former advance man. It's worth noting, though, that the venerable Lloyd Cutler and Abner Mikva, two Washington graybeards who served as White House counsel under Clinton, have escaped criticism. They supervised Livingstone and, during their tenure, never expressed disappointment in his performance.

The greatest worry in the White House is, of course, Kenneth Starr. Will the independent prosecutor indict any Clinton officials? Some in the Clinton orbit feel that the longtime Republican will try to indict presidential counselor Bruce Lindsey, whom he recently named as an unindicted co-conspirator. Those same folks quickly add that the charges are unfair. Nevertheless, they worry. But that's all they do. There's no battle plan in case an indictment comes down on the head of the president's pal.

Some stories won't die no matter how hard the White House tries. Last week, *The New Yorker*'s Jim Stewart breathlessly reported Starr had considered, but rejected, the idea of naming the Clintons as unindicted co-conspirators. Given Stewart's bona fides as the author of *Blood Sport*, wire services picked up the story. Turns out Stewart had unearthed old news. *Newsweek*'s Michael Isikoff and Daniel Klaidman had the same story more than a month earlier. And some issues are impossible to plan for. The White House's elaborate list of some 200,000 Americans has been much in the news. This "database," the White House maintains, is simply used to update lists for Christmas cards, parties and so on. David McIntosh, a House Republican, has been hounding the White House to turn over the list. Quinn, the White House counsel, refuses. You'll recall, he has always taken a tough lawyerly line on requests for White House documents. It was Quinn who urged Bernard Nussbaum not to allow the Park Police unfettered access to Vince Foster's office in the wake of the Arkansan's suicide. Quinn takes a similarly tough line with McIntosh, saying he can look at the database, but he can't have it. "Clearly, all they want to do is mischaracterize this," Quinn told me. In the end, few seriously think this database is, in fact, anything more than a souped-up address book. All of this has led to some gallows humor. Al Gore and his former chiefs of staff gathered at the home of Gore pal Fred DuVal for a party marking the fourth anniversary of Gore's selection as Clinton's running mate. Quinn, a former Gore chief of staff, deadpanned: "I'm glad my temporary assignment as White House counsel is over." With Whitewater dripping every day, who could blame Quinn if he'd been serious? •

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St. Chris on the road to Damascus.

A MAN OF GOOD INTENTIONS

By Charles Lane

Profound disappointment creased the usually impassive face of Warren Christopher the night of May 29. The secretary of state and his staff on the seventh floor of the State Department were hearing about the election returns from Israel. Benjamin Netanyahu, a committed foe of trading the Golan Heights for peace with Hafez al-Assad's Syria, had defeated Shimon Peres, Israeli architect of the land-for-peace enterprise. Christopher had invested more than three years of effort, as well as presidential, national and personal prestige in trying to broker such a deal. Syria was "the key to completing the circle of peace," he had said. That circle was to crown Christopher's own lifetime of public service. Now it all suddenly seemed unattainable.

Christopher will probably go to his grave wondering how it might have been different. Here's one thought: Netanyahu won by only 29,000 votes, thanks to a 55 percent majority among Israeli Jews. (Israeli Arabs backed Peres.) If during the Israeli campaign Assad had made a confidence-building gesture toward the Israeli public, he could well have tilted fence-sitters into Peres's column. Instead, Assad made trouble. He sat out the regional anti-terrorism summit called in response to suicide bombings in Israel. The Hezbollah guerrillas in southern Lebanon that he and his Iranian allies control rained Katyusha rockets on northern Israel; though Peres struck back, the largely ineffectual barrage reinforced doubts about his qualifications as a military leader.

And Assad went out of his way to humiliate Christopher, the American messenger of land-for-peace, when he flew to the region to broker a cease-fire. The Syrian dictator forced Christopher to wait two hours while he met the Russian foreign minister, then stood him up completely for another appointment. Was this all the diplomatic capital the Clinton administration's most skilled negotiator had earned in *two dozen* missions to Damascus, the capital of a state designated by the U.S. as a sponsor of international terrorism?

You can fault Christopher for trying too hard, but not necessarily for trying. If the engagement of Assad was an illusion, it was shared by the Bush administration and by both Peres and the late Prime Minister Yitzhak Rabin. They figured Assad's loss of his erstwhile Soviet sponsor, coupled with his isolation in an Arab world moving toward recognition of Israel, would render him more accommodating. Should the U.S. have told its ally not to pursue the opportunity, or withheld the services of its most skilled facilitator?

Still, Christopher's stewardship at Foggy Bottom was not supposed to culminate on such an ambiguous note. He came in as a certified heavyweight, with a glittering résumé. Former deputy secretary under Cyrus Vance and Ed Muskie at Jimmy Carter's State Department. Consummate deal-closer who clinched the Iran hostage negotiations. Managing partner of Los Angeles's white-shoe O'Melveny & Meyers law firm. Chairman of the commission that had rooted out police brutality in L.A. after the Rodney King beating. Mention Christopher, and the adjective that comes back again and again is "able."

Another is "uncharismatic"—though not always in a pejorative sense. Christopher makes a mystique of his being preternaturally quiet, modest and deliberate. "Steadiness" is the attribute he prizes most. Though sometimes the rail-thin secretary seems as if he might disappear into his tailored double-breasted suits and French cuffs, even these incongruous clothes are an effort to project seriousness. "I always thought that I would do things in a conservative way to maximize the progressiveness of my policy positions," he told Robert Scheer of *The Los Angeles Times*. "If you are courteous and prudent, you can advance causes and advance ideas that would be unacceptable for others."

If Christopher's surface traditionalism is unexpected in a power broker from flashy L.A., it may be because its origins lie in the stark landscape of tiny Scranton, North Dakota. His father, Ernest, was a banker, school-board president and a New Dealer. The Depression forced him to foreclose on his friends' homes, as young Warren watched. The anguish took its toll. At 49, he suffered a stroke. The Christophers moved to Hollywood, hoping the climate would help Ernest recover, but he died in 1941. The tragedy forced Christopher to work to support the family, an experience of poverty he never forgot.

Over the next quarter-century, Warren Christopher was to recreate in himself the role of socially concerned establishmentarian his father had played on the smaller stage of Scranton. Building on his father's New Dealism, Christopher emerged from the crucible of early cold war California—the time of the Hollywood Ten

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and Richard Nixon's anti-Communist campaigns—as an avatar of Democratic good intentions, a '50s liberal of the Eleanor Roosevelt-Adlai Stevenson school.

At Stanford Law School, Christopher was the star pupil of the dynamic young dean, Carl Spaeth, who had served at the State Department under Nelson Rockefeller during the war and attended the original United Nations conference in San Francisco. It was Spaeth, Christopher said during a speech at Stanford Law earlier this year, who "first stimulated my interest in the work in which I am now engaged full time." Under his wing, Christopher became enamored of liberal "wise men" like Dean Acheson and George Marshall. He kindled to the notion of a world order based on international law.

Following a clerkship with Supreme Court Justice William O. Douglas that Spaeth secured for him, Christopher joined O'Melveny and was recruited as a speechwriter for Democrat Pat Brown, who defeated William Knowland for governor in 1958. "Responsible liberalism" was Christopher's contribution to Brown's political lexicon, as well as his own evolving creed. In 1965 Governor Brown named Christopher to the McCone Commission that looked into the Watts Riots. Christopher drafted a report that today seems a period piece of Great Society liberalism—a plea for more jobs, schools and housing to cure "the witch's brew" of unemployment and alienation among black Angelenos. Christopher challenged, discreetly, the retrograde O'Melveny line on race in a Stanford Law Review article calling the Voting Rights Act "an appropriate, if not belated, effort to preserve the integrity of our nation's ethos."

His dedication to earnest, internationalist liberalism—which Christopher has carried with him for years—has often been overlooked in analyses that focus on his propensity for lawyering and negotiation. When he was first named secretary of state by President-elect Clinton, Christopher, in a show of uncharacteristic exuberance, called the appointment "a dream come true." Some people took this to mean he had finally made up for being passed over by Carter when Vance quit the post in 1980. It also alluded to the opportunities he saw for himself and his worldview at a rare, plastic moment in history.

Like Acheson, present at the creation of the cold war order, Christopher felt he had been picked to create a new, lasting global foundation. "Not since the late 1940s has our nation faced the challenge of shaking and shaping an entirely new foreign policy for a world that's fundamentally changed," he told his Senate confirmation hearing. "We need to design a new strategy for protecting American interests by laying the foundations for a more just and more stable world."

Almost immediately, everything went off the rails. Nasty crises in Haiti and Somalia consumed attention that had been budgeted for the Middle East, Russia and China. Even more dire was the Serbian ethnic cleansing in Bosnia, a phenomenon the likes of which American foreign policy hadn't had to confront since the 1940s. Christopher never seemed to grasp what all the moral fuss was about. Dispatched to Europe in May 1993 to sell the allies on Clinton's policy of arming the Bosnians and bombing the Serbs, Christopher struck out. Returning, he moaned to Congress that Bosnia was "a problem from hell." He chalked it up to "ancient hatreds." He tsk-tsked about "atrocities on all sides."

Within the White House, his line was "don't Americanize the issue," Elizabeth Drew reports in *On the Edge*. The U.S., he said, could probably pressure the Europeans into using more force, "but it isn't worth it." As one participant in the policy recalls, "he didn't really want to play.... It wasn't like he was wrong. He just felt it was his job to shave it, to avoid having the problem overshadow the rest of the administration." By summer, Christopher, with help from Clinton's political advisers, had moved the crisis to the back burner. "The United States," he said on July 21, "is doing all that it can consistent with our national interest."

On China, too, Christopher fumbled. And this was an area in which he had expertise, having carried out the delicate mission of informing Taiwan in 1979 that Jimmy Carter was going to normalize relations with the People's Republic. As managing partner at O'Melveny, Christopher had visited China and tried to involve the firm more deeply in the Asia trade. In a 1985 *Los Angeles Times* op-ed, he celebrated China's rise to superpower status, and predicted that pro-democracy reformers would soon gain the upper hand. And compared to Bosnia, U.S. interests in China were more tangible: the investments and exports of corporations like the aircraft manufacturers whom Christopher had himself represented; arms sales; nuclear non-proliferation. He even ventured that U.S. policy had been too "Eurocentric," given the boom in Asia.

But China's stubborn dictatorship was not about to reform itself. When Christopher visited China as secretary of state in March, 1994, the instinctive respect he had expressed for the Chinese as a lawyer seeking to do business among them was not exactly reciprocated. The hard-line leaders rounded up dissidents even as he sat and importuned them about freedom. In a plaintive *Washington Post* op-ed, Christopher responded to critics, noting the need to "balance" the two equal interests of free politics and free markets. "My purpose was to inform China's leaders of the urgent need to make further progress on human rights, and to reaffirm our intention to engage China constructively on the many issues where our interests coincide." He had done so, some bad "atmospherics" notwithstanding. What was the problem?

By the time of the Republican sweep in the 1994 midterm election, Clinton's foreign policy was generally seen as a failure. Christopher, appointed to keep foreign crises from undermining the president's domestic agenda, was blamed. "You couldn't wake up in the morning without seeing speculation about who the next secretary of state was going to be," says Winston Lord, Christopher's Asia aide. National Security Adviser Anthony Lake was encroaching on Christopher's turf.

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Fed up with the infighting and bad press, Christopher told Clinton in December 1994 he was ready to resign. Clinton sounded out Colin Powell and then Sam Nunn for the job, but when they said no, he asked Christopher to stay on.

Ironically, Christopher's recovery began with this turn of events. Clinton's failure to find anyone to replace him effectively renewed his mandate—albeit more as the general contractor of foreign policy than as its architect. He more or less ceded the initiative on issues such as Haiti and Bosnia to Lake; within his own department, figures such as Strobe Talbott on Russia and Richard Holbrooke on Bosnia became power centers unto themselves; Vice President Al Gore took a higher profile on Russia, the global environment, nuclear weapons. But at least now Christopher's bureaucratic foes had to accept that he was at Foggy Bottom to stay. "He's shown toughness and resilience," says Lord. "He stuck in there."

Viewed as Christopher himself would view it—in a spirit of detachment—the record since is not without its accomplishments. NATO's eastward expansion gradually advances. Largely thanks to the administration's decision to change course and downplay the U.S.-Japan trade deficit, disputes with Tokyo have given way to a renewed mutual security pact. GATT was successfully concluded; the Mexican bailout basically worked. Troops went to Haiti, restored President Jean-Bertrand Aristide to power and stemmed a tide of refugees—without casualties. The U.S.-brokered Dayton accords have brought at least temporary peace to Bosnia, enforced by another casualty-free American deployment.

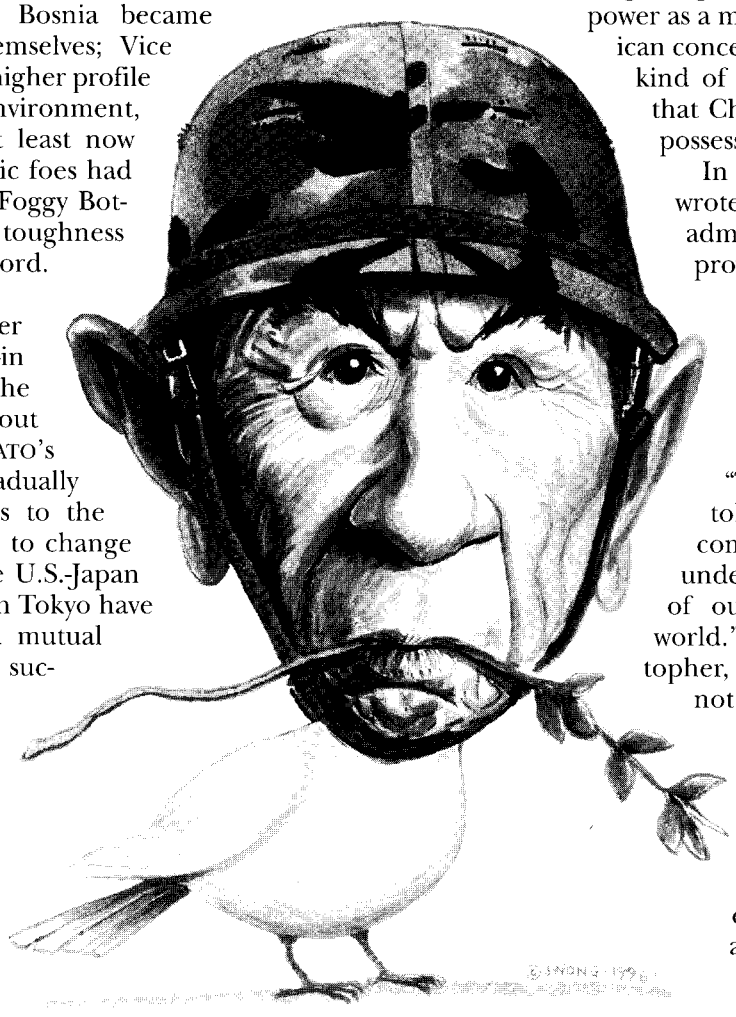

ILLUSTRATION BY JEFFREY WONG FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

Certain problems, it turns out, were best dealt with by Christopher's all-purpose prescription: "steadiness." In the wake of Boris Yeltsin's defeat of the Communists, it appears to have been wise to wait out the vicissitudes of the giant country's transformation. On the Korean peninsula, Christopher's course of compromise probably has conceded the Stalinists in the North a nuke or two, yet this was defensible in a situation where the U.S. held few cards. There was no stomach in this country, South Korea, or Japan, for economic sanctions that might have led to war. By the time the U.S. and its allies deliver a peaceful reactor to the North Koreans as payment for their freeze on bomb development, the Communists may be gone anyway.

Yet neither Christopher nor any other Clintonite has truly met the lofty goal of "shaping a new foreign policy for a new world." For that, Christopher would need more than just his ingrained sobriety, good intentions and diplomatic skills. He would need a way to distinguish between those deals we will pursue and those we will refuse even to entertain. That, in turn, would require thinking of the U.S. not only as the leader but as the rightful hegemon of the post-cold war world—and integrating the use of coercive military power as a means for backing up American concepts of world order. It is this kind of robust moral imagination that Christopher has never really possessed.

In speeches and articles he wrote after his stint in the Carter administration, Christopher provided the most extensive articulation of his vision. He proclaimed his belief in "practical idealism" (an anodyne formulation reminiscent of "responsible liberalism"). "The true pragmatist," he told the 1981 Bates College commencement, "is one who understands that idealism is one of our vital assets in today's world." But ideals were, for Christopher, a matter of policy process, not policy goals. The point of foreign policy was not to reshape the world or its component nations according to American norms (though that would be nice). It was to do business on an honorable, good-faith basis with everyone, based only on "an objective judgment whether the people claiming to be the government actually have control, and whether they are willing to live up to minimum diplomatic standards.... Nonrecognition never has and never will unseat a government we do not like," he said in an address titled "On the Virtues of Talking."

He prescribed "managed competition" with the Soviets, greased by "inducements" such as Western investment in the Soviet oil industry. He saw Ronald Reagan's "moral crusade" against Soviet Communism as "gratuitously harmful," "inflammatory," "fanaticism." "From the premise that the Soviet Union is our enemy," he said, "it would seek to bring down the Soviet system." This would yield a hard-line backlash in Moscow, maybe

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war. But history has shown the opposite: radical political change in the enemy camp was the prerequisite for peace, not a threat to it. Reagan had provoked the rise of Gorbachev, not a new Stalin. Reagan was the pragmatic idealist.

As for the most consuming episode of his service, the hostage crisis, it showed, Christopher said, that America was "quietly strong," a successful, low-key talker. The U.S. managed to "preserve its honor"—and honor, in the sense of absorbing setbacks stoically, has always meant a lot to the man from Scranton—"not by retaliation or vengeance, but by preserving the lives of the hostages." The resolution of the crisis vindicated "steady diplomacy in pursuit of our interests, in contrast to the impetuous resort to force where its use would damage our interests."

Even among Iranians, Christopher had found men capable of establishing a dispassionate, no-bullshit atmosphere. He proudly recalled his meeting with Iran's emissary: "I told him, 'Look I have a lot of speeches I could make to you, and you probably have some too, but let's put those aside.' And we did. Our discussions were almost wholly without polemics or posturing." It was the rest of the world that needed such clear-headedness. Among the American public, Christopher wrote, a "better perspective ... might have made the episode more understandable and encouraged a calmer and more deliberate reaction.... The hatred of the Iranians for the United States could be understood only against the background of the Shah and U.S. support for him."

Christopher saw force as something you threaten to deter your adversary from an unwanted action, as a quiet threat from Carter had caused Iran to abandon plans for a trial of hostages. Force as a coercive or punitive tool was usually not only ineffective, but dishonorable. "It would not be an especially appealing or useful depiction of America," he wrote, "to have it known that when we are confronted by uncivilized groups we readily jettison our own standards." But it wouldn't be especially useful to have it known we'll *never* lash out, either. Hadn't President-elect Reagan's sheer unpredictability, which Christopher himself pointedly noted to his Iranian negotiating partners, spurred the hostage deal?

Christopher's interesting record on the use of force *within* the United States makes an instructive contrast. As LBJ's deputy attorney general, Christopher visited riot-torn Detroit and urged the president to put down the violence with Army troops. When riots swept Washington, D.C. in 1968, Christopher again promptly advised the president to deploy the Army. Twenty-plus years later, when L.A. erupted at the acquittal of the cops who beat Rodney King, Christopher told Mayor Tom Bradley to quit dithering and get the Marines. ("I had been through that bull in Detroit," Christopher wrote in *The Los Angeles Times.*) Bradley authorized Christopher to call the White House himself.

These decisions seemed easier not only because the danger loomed outside Christopher's window, but because of the clear legal and moral authority of the government to use force to keep domestic order. In the international sphere, such questions are rarely decided by clear laws. The president's judgment, his confidence in the rightness of his cause, must govern the choice. Christopher, who believes in the vital importance of seeing things from the other guy's perspective—indeed, of trying to imagine why he might have good reason not to like you—seems skeptical that such moral certainty can often be attained in America's dealings abroad.

To be sure, Christopher has, as secretary of state, made Iran a pariah—even more than did Reagan himself. The Clinton administration has not relaxed the pressure on Iraq. Yet elsewhere an inability to cut to the chase corrodes U.S. policy. If the peace process in Bosnia is to retain credibility, the U.S. may have to quit importuning Serbian President Slobodan Milosevic for help in removing war criminals from power, and arrest them. Christopher, whose contribution to the Dayton deal was to stage a "take it or leave it" encounter with Bosnian President Alija Izetbegovic in which he demanded that the Bosnians yield the Serbs a wider corridor connecting their territories, is unlikely to see things in those terms. Eager to preserve the one-year U.S. "exit strategy," he and Anthony Lake have urged that elections proceed in all three entities of Bosnia, based on a phony certification that the conditions for a "free and fair" vote exist, even though Serbs will be voting in an atmosphere controlled by war criminals.

China is, indeed, a much more complex matter, a huge and culturally alien country with which the United States has many issues to resolve. Here, too, however, the time may be approaching when constructive engagement cannot be sustained. In April 1995, a miscommunication between Christopher and Chinese Foreign Minister Qian Qichen gave Beijing the impression that Taiwan President Lee Teng-hui wouldn't be granted a visa to visit the U.S. When Congress forced the administration to let Teng in anyway, Beijing felt double-crossed by Christopher and cut off all contact with him for the next eight months. In February of this year, U.S. warships defused the Taiwan Straits crisis. The best the administration has done since is a Chinese promise to quit pirating U.S. intellectual property. The State Department is currently fly-specking CIA reports on Chinese missile technology exports, hoping to avoid a showdown over that.

In his 1985 op-ed, Christopher called it "the height of presumption ... to regard the nation of 1 billion people as just a playing card in the U.S. deck." But if China is no longer vital as an anti-Soviet card, what argument remains for non-confrontationalism? The administration's approach, recently reformulated in a major address by Christopher that set the stage for a quiet "strategic" discussion in Beijing by Lake, is to give engagement yet another chance—this time at a higher level, with annual presidential summits.

How does this relate to Christopher's losing bet on Syria? Around the time of Christopher's refused resignation, the Clinton administration, fighting for relevancy after the Republican landslide, decided to spot-

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light foreign policy. "Where can Clinton look for the sort of high-profile accomplishment that could boost his sagging approval ratings as he readies his reelection campaign?" *The Los Angeles Times* asked on Christmas Day, 1994. "Astonishingly, many aides point to Syria, for decades a blight on America's Middle East policy.... A breakthrough is seen for 1995." Christopher made himself indispensable to the task.

Christopher first visited Assad back in February 1993, securing a promise that Syria would, in principle, settle for less than an immediate handover of the Golan. Five months later, in July 1993, Christopher got Syria to call off a Hezbollah barrage that had been met by Israeli countershelling. But in September the Israel-PLO deal infuriated Assad. He froze discussions, not budging even when Christopher curried favor with a transfer of used American jetliners to Syria from Kuwait. *The New York Times* reported that Syria's foreign minister "showed no appreciation ... but regarded it as a virtually meaningless gesture."

Only an audience with Clinton in Geneva in January 1994 convinced Assad to let Christopher resume shuttling. By August, Christopher got the two sides to agree to talk first about the military aspects of a Golan withdrawal and to table the knottier matter of timing. In December 1995, Christopher—now working with Peres, who was more flexible than Rabin—arranged a negotiating format that Assad could accept: talks between senior diplomats from the two countries, with Americans present. "We stand on the threshold of ending the Arab-Israeli conflict," Christopher said on January 18, 1996.

In hindsight, none of the "progress" was inconsistent with the view that Assad was stringing Peres and Christopher along, accumulating what benefits he could from U.S. attention. As Daniel Pipes wrote acidly, "his goal is not peace but a peace process." If Christopher isn't careful, people may get the same idea about him. Assad needed the U.S. much more than the U.S. needed him. Christopher might have fared better if he had waited until the conflict was truly ripe for resolution—until Assad was desperate. In this sense, Christopher's persistence was itself a misconception of his "steadiness." He had failed to plumb the motivation of his counterpart, in all its bloody-mindedness.

Since the Israeli election, Christopher has kept a brave front. According to members of the efficient, admiring and protective staff he has assembled around him, barely two minutes after he had absorbed the news of Netanyahu's win, he was already plotting strategy. He scheduled a highly visible voyage to the Middle East, where he huddled both with Netanyahu and with moderate Arabs worried by Bibi's views about the West Bank settlements (and Christopher's own errant remark, later "clarified," that the U.S. might "adapt" its policy to Israel's on that issue).

But the exercise had a valedictory quality. No one would blame this loyal Democrat, recently turned 70, if he took the new presidential term as a cue to bow out and submit his record to history. Then again, he could focus on shoring up the U.S.'s strategic base in the Gulf. The June 25 terrorist attack outside a United States Air Force compound in Saudi Arabia killed nineteen American airmen—and created a wave of trepidation. At the time, Christopher hastened from Cairo to the scene. Struggling to contain his emotions, he toured the rubble, comforted the wounded and swore to prosecute the authors of this "dastardly act of cowardice ... no matter how long it takes." On July 3, as Christopher left for a well-earned vacation in California, *The Washington Post* reported that suspects in the attack might have received assistance from Syria. •

Where journalists die by the dozens.

THE MEAN STREETS OF ALGERIA

By Anna Husarska

ALGIERS

What shall I wear? A veil? A bulletproof vest? Both? News from Algeria being rare in the American press, I didn't have the faintest idea how to prepare myself for coming here. I had learned one thing from the ghastly reports of various human rights groups: the principal targets of extremist Islamic attacks in Algeria are journalists, foreigners and women. In these categories, I am three for three. So as I packed I was a little apprehensive—and not only about the choice of garment.

Anxiety and paranoia were warranted. The week before my trip, the bodies of seven French Trappist monks killed by the Islamic Armed Group (GIA) were discovered. Their throats were slit. The French government called on its citizens (of which I am one) to avoid Algeria.

I think I was the only foreigner aboard the Air Alge-

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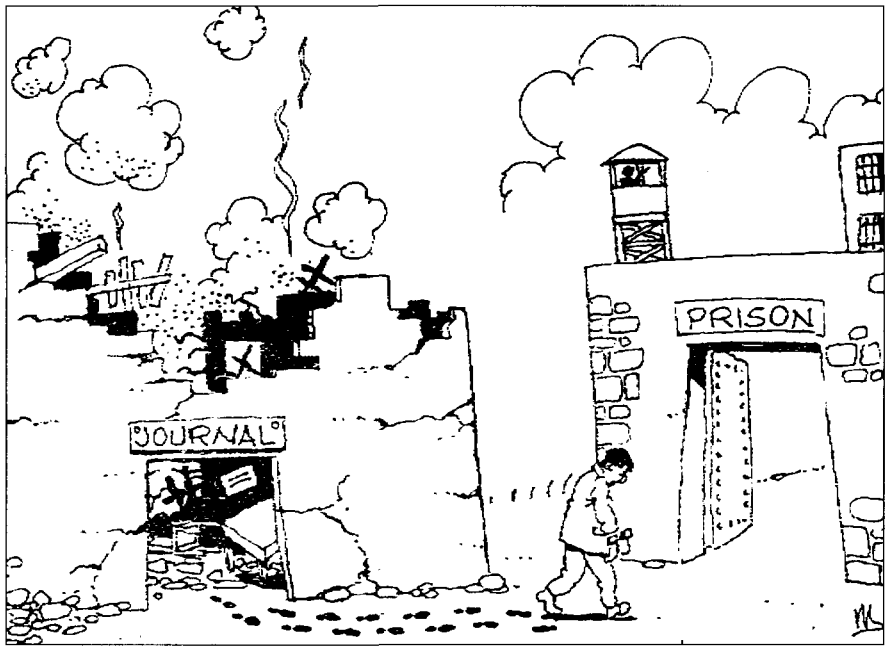
ria flight leaving Marseilles. Algeria has not been a popular destination since its political conflict spiraled into virtual civil war. In 1992, in the first round of Algeria's first free elections after decades of one-party rule, the fundamentalist Islamic Salvation Front scored a stunning victory, prompting the army-backed government to cancel the second round and to install Liamine Zeroual as president. In response, the Islamic militants mounted a terrorist campaign against everyone and everything that they associated with the state. To date, some 50,000 people have died.

Once the plane landed in Algiers, a government representative whisked me to a car, as a duo of bodyguards trailed in another vehicle. Until the day I left, I was not to liberate myself from these two and their guns: one carried a Beretta in a colorful plastic shopping bag; the other liked to show off his Kalash. Though at first I was annoyed by their omnipresence, by the third day I had resigned myself to it. And once they realized I wasn't a secret agent, they mellowed into dedicated armed nannies.



CARTOON BY "MAZ" THAT APPEARED ON FEBRUARY 18 IN *EL WATAN*, AN ALGERIAN DAILY

Of course, I was under no illusion that they were there solely for my benefit. I knew the government's people were monitoring my every gesture, and they made any investigation of the regime's human rights violations or persecution of journalists impossible.

And even if my Rambo-like companions had viewed my safety as their only concern, I'm not sure how much they could have done. On the lists compiled by human rights groups—*Reporters sans frontières*, the Committee to Protect Journalists, the Algerian human rights ombudsman—journalists almost never show up as "wounded" or "disappeared" but are listed mostly as "killed" (sixty-one since the beginning of the conflict). In other words, the bullets aimed at them tend to be accurate.

Leafing through recent issues of the daily *El Watan* brought home this reality even more powerfully. The February 18 issue carried inside a page from each of its three main competitors: *Le Matin*, *Le Soir d'Algérie* and *L'Opinion*. The inclusion of these pages was an expression of solidarity; a week earlier a car bomb exploded on the Algerian equivalent of Fleet Street, killing twenty-one people, wounding sixty-eight and destroying the editorial offices of those three dailies. The editors had thought they were safe behind the high walls of La Maison de la Presse, a former military barracks that the government had given to private dailies to protect them.

The February 18 *El Watan* contained two other items relating to journalists: Achour Belghezli of the weekly *Le Pays* had been killed in Tizi-Ouzou by terrorists, and Bouakba Saad of the weekly *Ech-Chourouk el Arabi* had been imprisoned by the government after being accused of defaming ruling party leaders. *El Watan* ran a cartoon of a journalist going from the debris of his bombed-out office to a jail.

Why do the terrorists target the press? Everyone I spoke with agreed: "*C'est l'effet médiatique*"—It's the headline-grabbing effect! This was explained to me by Cherif Belkacem, a charming 62-year-old veteran of the war against the French in the 1950s and a retired government official. Belkacem, known to his friends as Djamel, insisted that journalists are killed not because of the opinions they hold but because of the noise their deaths make. It was not always so: among the first dozen women killed after August 1993, I counted seven fortune tellers. But there is no Committee to Protect Fortune Tellers. To get attention, it's smarter to kill a reporter than a fortune teller—or a hairdresser, or a singer, or members of other professions also prohibited by Islamic law. Thus the macabre list of dead hacks.

In this climate of fear, some journalists seem to have a premonition: in December 1994, an unfinished note was found in the desk of columnist Said Mekbel of *Le Matin*. "I would like to know who will kill me," it read. "... When will I be killed? ... I ask myself all these questions, but the murderers, do they have doubts, and what kind of doubts?" The note was discovered after Said had left the editorial office for a nearby restaurant and was shot dead sitting over his full plate.

Knowing how exposed they are, most of the journalists I met chose to live in high-security residences provided and partly paid for by the state. Others are "SDF," or *sans domicile fixe*—in other words, homeless. Still others, very few, try to continue as if all were normal. Baya

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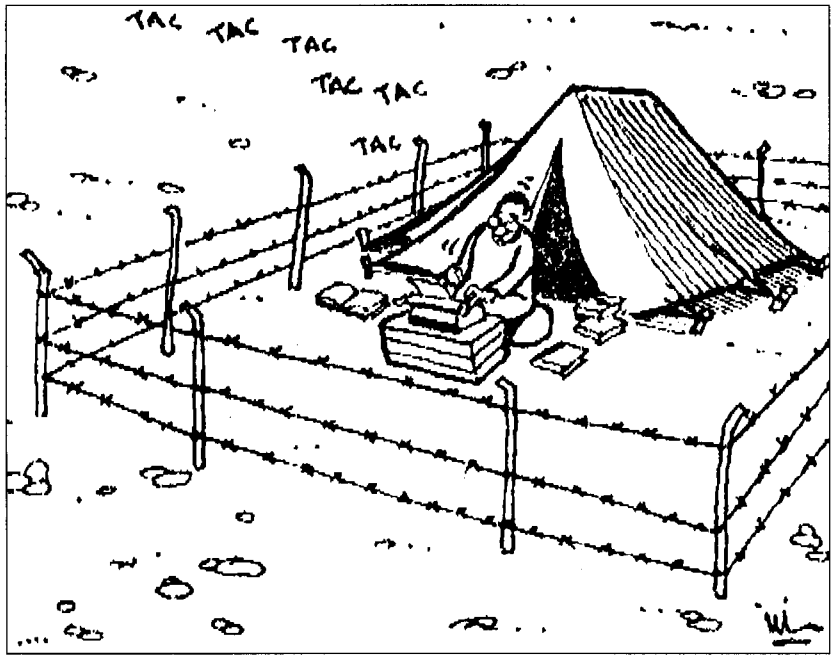
Gacemi, editor of *La Tribune*, says her stint as a war correspondent in Baghdad emboldened her. Houda Bouchaib, who edits the culture pages at *El Watan*, refuses to change anything in her life—"otherwise I'm playing their game." But she does carry a toiletries pouch at all times, "just in case." I later learned that her father, a lawyer in Medea, was abducted eight months ago. He is probably dead.

For Ahmed Toumiat, the president of the Algerian Journalists Association, the worst anxiety comes from the isolation, "both from the rest of the town and the country when we're in those hotels, and from the outside world." His confession explained why in this apparently hostile country I was received so warmly. I was a very rare species: a visitor from abroad. At Hotel El Maran, a high-security residence for journalists, it was easy to see what he meant. Situated on the coast east of Algiers, this former holiday center offers the beach, the smell of pine trees, balcony views, a sandbox for the kids. And yet because of the security measures one feels incarcerated. A friend reporter who brought me there called it "a cell," adding, "but it is that or death."



CARTOON BY "MAZ," FROM *EL WATAN*

Of the major news publications here, only two are not walled off in high-security compounds. As a result, most journalists shuttle between a work-ghetto and a dormitory-ghetto. When one is killed an epidemic of depression spreads in this tightly knit and cloistered community.

My own residence, El Djazair Hotel, is an imposing white mansion, more than 100 years old, with elaborate blue tiles, concave arches, hanging gardens. Discreet servants deliver drinks and a dozen satellite TV channels are beamed in. Most of the guests are permanent fixtures: politicians, intellectuals, artists, lawyers, all here because this is one of the few secure places in town (cars are searched, and the hotel is full of spooks and plainclothes). The world beyond El Djazair's walls may be dangerous, yet when told I couldn't go out without the bodyguards, I felt trapped.

Of course I did go out. First to Bab El Oued, in the old part of the town where, on October 10, 1988, in front of the police station, Algerian soldiers first shot their own people. Now Bab El Oued is a "hot" district, controlled by terrorists. I went to the 1st of May Square, where many anti-government demonstrations started, and to Boulevard Amirouche, where in January 1995 a suicide car bomb killed forty-two and wounded 286 inside the state security headquarters. When I drove through the quarter called Kouba, state security forces were massed in an unusual display. The next day I learned that eighteen terrorists had been killed that day in the quarter.

One place I did not venture was the heart of the Old Town, Casbah, where the streets are steep and so narrow that you can sometimes touch both walls with extended hands. Casbah is the most dangerous place in town, infested with "Green Khmers," as one journalist calls the terrorists. Olivier Quemeneur, a French journalist on assignment for ABC TV, went there on February 1, 1994, and became the first foreign journalist assassinated in Algeria.

As I went around I realized that, like Olivier, I was looking for trouble. But how else was I going to portray the omnipresent danger, the feeling that every moment may be my last alive? On its face, everything looks so normal. On the seafront boulevard, which reminds me of Cannes, young people hold hands, air-conditioning repair shops repair air-conditioners, bakeries smell of bread, and mothers scold their children. Passengers get impatient when the bus is late (some never board the bus: Djamel Bouhidel, a photographer, was killed in October 1993 while waiting for a bus in Blida).

It may seem that as a foreigner and a journalist I am doubly exposed, but this is not so. Short visits are less dangerous, since I'll be gone before the word of my presence reaches those who decide which infidels to eliminate. I know this because I studied the pattern. (I may be crazy to come here, but I'm not foolish.) The foreigners targeted by terrorists were almost all permanent residents of Algeria, from the two French teachers killed in 1992 to the seven French monks whose bodies were discovered just before I arrived.

Despite my short stay, however, I was careful on the phone, to protect both myself and those I was meeting. After a few days in Algeria one gets almost unconsciously into the habit of breaking all habits, of avoiding making precise appointments. Most local journalists have no fixed timetables, no phone numbers, no place they can call home, which only increases the stress.

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They don't even keep the same car for long, lest it be identified. They have lost their identity. They introduce themselves as accountants or teachers (though teachers, too, have been prime targets). Reporters from the official Algerian press agency remain anonymous, and most journalists don't sign their real names. Despite such precautions, many are discovered. Amel Boumediene, a leading reporter at *Liberté* whom I met, was frantic: after hiding for two years behind a pseudonym, her real name was mistakenly used in print. Many journalists try to make the terrorists believe they have emigrated, as 200 Algerian reporters have.

Most journalists are killed outside their homes when, as they do from time to time, especially on religious holidays, they venture out of their fortresses to visit parents, to see their kids or their spouses. The guidelines are strict: never stay more than thirty minutes, or the terrorists will have time to mobilize their gunmen. In October 1994, Tayeb Bouterfif, a radio journalist living in Hotel El Manar, went for the first time in a year to visit his wife and child. He was shot fetching his car. Of course, journalists are killed elsewhere, too. Perhaps the most atrocious story is that of Hamid Mahiout, a reporter at *Liberté*, and his driver, Ahmed Ben Khalfallah, who were abducted and tortured. Their heads were impaled on spikes on the fence of a cultural center.

The GIA has made its policy clear: those who fight with their pens will die by the sword. The terrorism touches journalists of all political tendencies. The editor of the state-owned daily *El Moudjahid*, Mohamed Abderrahmani, the teacher of a whole generation of Algerian reporters, was assassinated in March 1995 when caught in a traffic jam. Journalists close to the Islamists such as Abdelkader Hireche, a TV reporter killed in a café next to his house in March 1994, become victims, too. Quitting the profession is no safeguard, either. Djilali Arabdiou, a 61-year-old retired photographer, was shot dead in front of his wife last March. The terrorists eliminate reporters and typists, proofreaders and cameramen, people working in Arabic and in French. They kill women who wear the veil, such as Khadidja Dahmani, shot in December 1995, and those who do not, such as Malika Sabour, killed seven months earlier. Both women were working for *Ech Chourouk el Arabi*, known for its personal ads and movie-star gossip.

Journalists cannot even look to the state as a reliable ally. For all their differences, says Omar Belouchet, editor of *El Watan*, the government and the fundamentalists are of like mind on freedom of the press. The government suppresses news of terrorism to deny the GIA publicity. In June 1994, for example, editors of print media received a confidential government circular with recommendations on covering security issues. Some of the juiciest: "Banalize and minimize the psychological effect of terrorist and subversive actions"; "Only exceptionally use it on front page"; "Give major play to atrocities committed by the Islamic regimes of Iran, Sudan and Afghanistan." And my favorite: "Reveal to the readership that violence is an endemic phenomenon of modern societies that causes thousands of deaths each year (almost one thousand violent deaths for the first quarter of 1993 in Washington D.C. alone)."

All the editors I asked said they practiced censorship only when it came to security matters. The weekly *La Nation* has chosen, honorably, simply to print nothing about security, since that way it is not subject to censorship at all. Even so, the government closed down the paper for a spell in 1992 and has done so again three times this year, most recently for trying to write about the government's human rights violations. Other papers, too, face this threat. Last May, a satirical weekly, *Mesmar*, was closed for printing caricatures of President Zeroual. A month before, Malika Boussouf of *Le Soir d'Algérie* was sentenced to three months' imprisonment for suggesting to an Italian newspaper that a certain political killing might not have been carried out by the terrorists.

El Watan was thus taking a risk when it wrote about two of the most notorious cases of government human rights violations against journalists: those of Djamel Fahassi, a radio reporter missing since he was secretly arrested in May 1995, and Abdelkader Hadi Banaanane, who was accused of "attacking the security of the state and national unity" when he revealed the whereabouts of a leader of the Islamic Salvation Front, for which he was sentenced in July 1995 to three years in prison. Omar Belouchet has had twenty-three investigations launched against him, of which twelve are still pending. One concerns his declaration to French TV, "I would not be surprised if tomorrow I found out that some of my colleagues were assassinated by the people who are in the power structures."

One day waiting to speak with Omar I was going through the folder "assassinated media" in *El Watan*, a thick file of clippings, one on top of another, in which I discerned an unmistakable pattern. First there would be a headline announcing an assassination, under it a title, then photographs of young, smiling faces of the victim(s) and a detailed description of the crime; then there always came a long report from the funeral; then the outraged editorials; and finally little clippings of denunciation from Human Rights Middle East, the Committee to Protect Journalists, Amnesty International, UNESCO and so on. Then there would be another story on a journalist's assassination, another big title with ID picture(s).... The headlines, the metaphors, the adjectives would repeat in a macabre monotony.

After an hour reading this folder and staring at those ID pictures, I looked down the corridor of *El Watan* and saw journalists coming and going, young men and women I had never seen before. Suddenly their faces looked just like the faces in the folder. And I realized that of the fifty journalists I had spoken to on this trip, at least one, almost certainly, would be killed before the year was over. •

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THE HARD QUESTIONS

Blowback

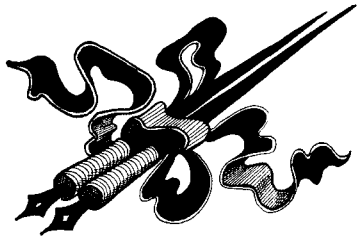
The most surprising thing about last month's attack on the American base in Saudi Arabia was our surprise. Islamic fundamentalists and outlaw regimes have targeted the U.S. for more than a dozen years. In 1983, Shiite suicide bombers opposed to U.S. intervention in Lebanon's civil war killed 241 American servicemen in their Beirut barracks. In 1988, militants, whom the U.S. accused of working for Libya, blew up a Pan Am jet, killing 270 civilians. Three years ago, followers of a fundamentalist Egyptian cleric leveled part of the World Trade Center. Only last November, Saudi fundamentalists attacked a U.S. base in Riyadh and killed five Americans.

Such attacks are predictable. They are not, contrary to their depiction in the American press, random acts that defy logic. They are battles in a war that pits the strongest and most revolutionary power in the world against those determined to resist its authority and values. The U.S. is revolutionary in that our economy and culture are based on rendering every other form of social organization and belief obsolete. America not only practices democracy, individualism and capitalism at home but actively works to transform and even undermine regimes that it believes pursues these virtues insufficiently. Content with political influence and economic gain, older imperial powers like Britain and France have traditionally been less insistent on turning client states into images of themselves.

The global economy we dominate, the "international community" we organize, the cultural imperatives we transmit through Nike, McDonald's and Disney, enfold the world in an embrace as pervasive as it is, at least in our eyes, seemingly irresistible. But what appears to us an embrace is to others a stranglehold. It is this conflict between modernizers and traditionalists, revolutionaries and defenders of the faith, that is being enacted so violently both within the Islamic states themselves and also along the fault lines between Islam and the West. This struggle runs far deeper than the cold war, which was, after all, simply a competition between two different versions of modernization.

The U.S. is under assault by those we label "Islamic fundamentalists" not because of what it is but for what it does. Countries such as Italy and Sweden are, after all, no less secular and "modern." But it is America that has the global military and economic reach to undermine traditional societies. Naturally, because of our unquestioning faith in technology, individualism, progress and consumption, we do not consider ourselves threatening. Puzzled when vilified, we assume our accusers must be demented. In truth, we and they live in different worlds.

This can be seen in many places, but perhaps nowhere more dramatically than in our relations with Saudi Arabia, a nation with which we are entwined by oil, money, politics and strategy, yet which is profoundly foreign to us culturally. We and the Saudis are linked, but in an uneasy and unstable union. The Saudi royal family has spent billions on high-tech weapons and billions more trying to buy off radical Arab regimes and groups. Yet it remains profoundly vulnerable. It is unable to defend itself from without, and is too politically insecure to deal effectively with radical dissension from within. It is, in truth, a classic client state. Its ruling family, with its myriad branches and affiliates, depends for its survival on a country it neither trusts nor emulates. The incessant American prodding to democratize undermines the legitimacy of the very regime the U.S. needs so much, just as it undermined the Shah of Iran. The Saudi royal family's external dependency weakens it internally. Yet it has little alternative. Like Egypt and Algeria, it is besieged from within.



The dilemma has grown worse since the Gulf war of 1991. Saudi Arabia is the linchpin of the U.S. presence in the Persian Gulf. Although it is Europe and Japan, not the U.S., that rely heavily on Gulf oil, Washington has assumed the role of overseer of the post-cold war economic and political order. George Bush took on Saddam Hussein not so much because Saddam gobbled up Kuwait as because his army posed a threat to the Saudi oil fields. The permanent U.S. military presence in Saudi Arabia, though still modest, jumped twenty-fold after the Gulf war to some 20,000 today, supplemented by 200 combat aircraft and twenty warships. This beefed-up presence fortifies America's base in nearby Bahrain (another wobbly oil kingdom, threatened by Islamic zealots), the center for naval operations in the area. The American military is now powerfully ensconced in the Gulf. But the regimes it protects are not.

Though it is common to blame Iran for most of the region's troubles, the worst of them are rooted in the affected countries themselves. The free flow of petro-dollars that financed the Saudi welfare state and bought off its opposition has dried up. The price of oil has dropped since the boom days, along with Saudi per-capita income. This has reduced the privileges of the elite, cut into employment (most jobs are done by foreigners anyway) and increased the restlessness of a society where three-quarters of the population is under the age of 30. The regime is weakened from both sides: from a middle class that wants to open up the feudal political system, and from Islamists who seek to purify the state of liberalizing influences.

The Saudis are also victims of a monster they helped unleash. Not only have they tried to buy off opposition by funding radical foreign Islamists, but during the Afghan war they sent hundreds of volunteers to fight against the Soviets. Veterans of that war have returned to haunt their backers. Last fall's Riyadh bombers were former Afghan "freedom fighters." The car bombing of the U.S. base at Dhahran was in retaliation for their beheading.

Thus not only the Saudis, but the U.S. as well, have been the target of this "blowback," to use the CIA term, from the Afghan war. To harass and ultimately drive the Soviets out of that country, the U.S. spent $3 billion, funneled through the CIA into Pakistan and then to the Islamic guerrillas. But the rebels were easier to arm than to disband. Since the Soviet pullout they have turned Afghanistan into a graveyard of feuding Islamic armies. And, with the victory over Moscow complete, the foreign volunteers have fanned out across the world to demonstrate their faith. The bombers of the World Trade Center were former mujahedin. Several hundred of them also fought in Bosnia on the Muslim side, and remain there despite government avowals that they have been sent back.

What goes around comes around. The hammer we used to bludgeon the Soviets in Afghanistan is now being used against us and our clients. This is an interconnected world: not only for the supposed blessings of free trade and instant communications, but also for terrorism. The U.S. cannot try to organize the show and avoid paying the bills. The tab for the "new world order" is only just beginning to arrive.

RONALD STEEL

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BOOKS & The Arts

Stanley Kauffmann on Films

Survivors

The silence is broken. The Persian Gulf War gets its first major film, **Courage Under Fire** (20th Century Fox); and the oddity is that, for all its brisk authenticity, Edward Zwick's picture is not really about the Gulf war. Not in the way that, for instance, *The Steel Helmet* and *Pork Chop Hill* were about Korea or *Go Tell the Spartans* and *Platoon* about Vietnam. Twenty minutes' revision of Patrick Sheane Duncan's screenplay, altering the place names, gender and races, and it could have been set in either of those preceding wars, possibly even in Grenada or Panama.

The real subject of the film is not a specific war but the military ethos itself. Heaven (the right reference?) knows that this ethos is essential to the safety of nations, but Zwick's choice of subject prompts comparison with his previous work. He made *Glory*, a film that will last as long as people care about films. (I showed it again recently in a film course and was again overwhelmed.) In *Glory* the black Union soldiers march to almost certain slaughter, not to support the military ethos or to stir our martial genes, but because history has at last given them a chance to risk their lives significantly. The march against Fort Wagner is really an assault on the limitations of black fate.

Now comes *Courage Under Fire*. (Zwick's two intervening films are on quite different subjects. *Leaving Normal* is far afield, and the battle scenes in *Legends of the Fall* are only incidents in a long story.) Unlike *Glory*, this new film exalts military professionalism. The general intent is to make the red-blooded among us regret at least partially that we weren't there. Basically, it's John Wayne time. Even though there's blood and pain, compare the combat scenes here with those in *Born on the Fourth of July*. With his first film, *About Last Night*, derived from a Mamet play, and with *Glory*, Zwick seemed headed for a career of socially critical filmmaking. *Legends of the Fall* pointed elsewhere. Now, with *Courage Under Fire*, Zwick, his talent and techniques glistening, joins the commercial mainstream.

Duncan's screenplay concerns two principal characters who never meet. After the Gulf war, Denzel Washington, a colonel in the tank corps who was in combat there, is asked to investigate the candidacy for the Medal of Honor of a helicopter captain who was killed, Meg Ryan. We see her exploits in flashback. As Washington investigates, contradictions come to light. More: every one of Ryan's crew who survived is in either physical or mental difficulty.

This isn't all. The picture opens in battle. In the heat of combat, the colonel gives a mistaken order that destroys an American tank. So, after the war, while he looks into the Ryan matter, he has his own troubles to bear. This friendly fire problem was included, I guess, to give Washington's character some texture, to keep him from being a flavorless military detective. The seeker after truth has his own truth-seeking to deal with.

Washington, whose best performance to date is still the one he gave in *Glory*, copes very competently with the everyday materials of this colonel. He is not asked for much more than verity at any moment, no exceptional largeness of spirit or emotion. It's a decent rendition of a relatively ordinary man. Meg Ryan is never quite convincing as the helicopter pilot-commander. She lacks authority; so, when her plane crashes and troubles arise with the crew, the weakening of her command isn't enough of an alteration. Lou Diamond Phillips has the right abrasive edge as one of her crew. Michael Moriarty, as the general in charge of the investigations, has replaced his former talent with mere self-confidence born of success.

Steven Rosenblum's editing is excellent, smoothly uniting present and past, articulating individual scenes alertly. I haven't much admired James Horner's scores for other Zwick films, but here his music seems organic, not imposed.

Zwick gives every sequence just the amount of pressure it needs: battles, inquiries, visits to bereaved parents. The most notable aspect of his directing here is his extraordinary reliance on Washington's face. Recurrently, the camera closes in slowly on the colonel—it can't quite be called a zoom—who is almost in close-up before the approach even begins. In fact, the very last shot of the film is one of those movements. It's as if Zwick saw Washington's face as the source of the drama, the real residence of the film.

Because of the conflicting accounts of Ryan's battle, there has already been comment comparing this film with *Rashomon*. This is wildly out of order. Kurosawa's film uses four differing but complete accounts of an event to dramatize the deep interplay between truth and ego. That is his theme. Zwick's film has no real theme: it's just a story. Layer after partial layer gets peeled off an event until the full facts come clear; and that full disclosure has no resonance whatso-

FILMS WORTH SEEING

Cold Comfort Farm. *English humor, 1932 style. Stella Gibbons's novel, about an airy London miss set down amidst rustic types, makes a nice crinkum-crankum treat. (Reviewed 5/27/96)* **The Horseman on the Roof.** *Come to ravishing Provence in the 1830s and watch a Byronic hero and a lovely lady in a lot of derring-do. (6/17/96)* **Human Rights Watch Film Festival.** *Look for it in your area. A series of forty-one films from fifteen countries. Most certainly worth sampling. (7/1/96)* **Who Killed Pasolini?** *The murder of this gay artist-activist by a gay hooker may have had political implications. A fine Italian docudrama. (7/1/96)*—**SK**

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ever. The apt comparison for *Courage Under Fire* is with *A Few Good Men*, another tale of a military investigation lapped in military professionalism.

Striptease (Castle Rock) in a way justifies, or at least explains, *The Scarlet Letter.* Demi Moore is on the go. What's more, this time she's on the go-go. Unlike many top female stars, especially those specializing in sex bombing, she wants to vary her pictures, to do lots of different things. Her Hester was unforgettable for all the wrong reasons, but now we can see that she didn't see her career as building to it: it was simply a switch. Before Hawthorne, she did, among others, a naval officer in *A Few Good Men*, a glandular executive in *Disclosure*; since Hawthorne, she did a distraught mother in *The Juror.* Now she does a stripper.

Striptease is ghastly. Moore is good. (Such distinctions are risky, I know. I still hear that I "raved" about *Showgirls*, which I lambasted, because I said that the dancing and Elizabeth Berkley were good.) Moore, mother of three, displays a terrific body, and she tosses off the stripper dance routines smoothly. (Choreography by Marguerite Derricks, who did *Showgirls*!) As in most of her films, her acting talent is quite adequate to the part, and she also has some humor. Certainly she is better in her role than Burt Reynolds is in his—his first "old" man—in which he mugs as a lecherous congressman.

Moore is stripping in a Florida club to earn money so that a judge will give her custody of her small daughter. (Played by Moore's own daughter, Rumer Willis.) She needs funds because she lost her job as an FBI secretary. How that secretary got so good so fast at stripping is just one of the questions it's not worth asking a film like this. All I could do was chuckle at Moore's gumption.

In her TV interviews to publicize *Striptease*, Moore appears with her head shaved. It's explained that she is now making a picture about the first female Navy seal. I can't wait for the seal.

The Low Life (Cabin Fever/Cinepix) is still one more sympathetic slide into Generation X, those bright college graduates with no grip on anything and no interest in getting a grip. This latest of these plentiful films deals with Yale graduates lolling around Hollywood. The limpest of the Yalies is finally stung to some sign of emotional life when his roommate is killed in a road accident. He cries at the grave, and we are meant to be cheered by his response. I was more cheered by Kyra Sedgwick as a Southern girl floating from date to date and by Richard Crudo's above-average cinematography.

Isn't it time for a film about Generation Y? •

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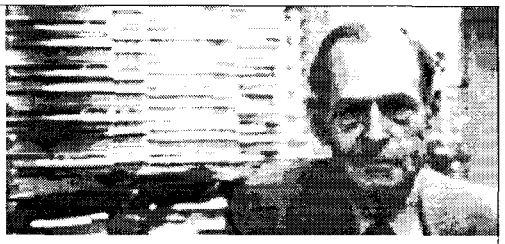

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Art, politics, and "Splendors of Imperial China."

Gathering and Scattering

By Stephen Owen

In 1132, in a memoir that served as the afterword for her late husband's compilation of ancient inscriptions, the poet Li Qingzhao wrote a fine meditation on collections and collecting. In the memoir she tells the history of her marriage and widowhood, a life woven together with building and then losing a huge collection of books and works of art. She describes the shared delight that she and her husband took in the objects that they acquired; but with the passage of time the pleasure subtly transformed into obsession. The collection grew larger, binding the couple to the collection's maintenance and extension, and corrupting the marriage by its demands. Finally she tells of the collection's gradual dissolution, punctuated by the death of her husband, in the turmoil following the invasion of North China by the Jurchen, a non-Chinese people on the northeastern frontier, in 1126. The account is unsparing in showing how something that once gave joy came to possess its owners more than they possessed it.

Toward the end of her memoir, Li Qingzhao turns to reflect on the experiences of earlier collectors, famous for their desperate tenacity in holding on to the objects that they had gathered: "It must be that human passions cannot be forgotten, even at death's edge. Or perhaps it is Heaven's will that beings as insignificant as ourselves are not fit to enjoy such lovely things." The Chinese phrase for "lovely things" applied especially to *femmes fatales* and more generally to anything or anyone that inspired an attachment so passionate that it destroyed the lover by love. To teach her readers resistance to the collector's passion, Li Qingzhao finally appealed to the venerable law of "gathering and scattering": whatever is collected must at last disperse, whatever is possessed must be let go and lost.

It is useful to consider Li Qingzhao's memoir when viewing "Splendors of Imperial China," the magnificent collection of Chinese art drawn from the Palace Museum, recently at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York and now touring the country. Although the Palace Museum has sent its treasures abroad on two previous occasions, to London in 1935-36 and to the United States in 1961-62, the present exhibition is the grandest of its kind. Beginning with neolithic jadework and bronzes of the second millennium B.C., it gives a wide representation of China's art through the eighteenth century. There is a representative selection of Chinese painting from the eleventh century on, interspersed with a substantial display of ceramics. The final room brings us at last to the great imperial collector, the Qianlong (Ch'ien-lung) emperor, who reigned from 1736 to 1795, and the *objets d'art* of his study.

Li Qingzhao's memoir has resonance on many levels, not the least of which is the depth of history behind each particular work—works lovingly hoarded, then passed on, stolen, given away and appropriated by rulers. It is also a valuable context in which to consider the political protests in Taiwan against sending these fragile national treasures to the United States, and to consider also Wen C. Fong's and James C.Y. Watt's lavish volume accompanying the collection, *Possessing the Past: Treasures from the National Palace Museum, Taipei.* Li Qingzhao reminds us how much the experience of art is bound to the possession of rare things, and it invites us to ask which is the possessor and which is the possessed.

Possessing the Past consists of twenty-four essays, more than half by Wen Fong and the rest by a range of distinguished scholars of Chinese art. Beginning with a piece by James Watt on the history of the collection, these essays cover the main categories of Chinese art, as it is constituted by the holdings of the Palace Museum. It omits those kinds of Chinese art that are not portable, such as sculpture, reliefs and wall-painting. As a result, the period between the bronze and jade of antiquity and the eleventh century is only scantily represented. With that reservation, *Possessing the Past* is virtually a history of Chinese art. The essays are lucid and informative and richly illustrated with color plates.

Like the exhibition itself, the book closes with an essay by Wen Fong on imperial patronage in the Qing (Ch'ien) Dynasty, focusing on Qianlong. Indeed, the book is very much like a museum, with the sequence of essays like a sequence of display halls, with the text explaining to us the fine points and the coherence of the array of images contained. The framing essays constitute the entrance and the exit, reminding us that this *is* a museum, housing a collection that has its own history. As its title suggests, *Possessing the Past* celebrates the collection and the history of collecting as much as the particular objects that were collected, and it invites us to consider how profoundly this peculiar institution shapes our experience of art.

The collection currently in Taipei is the legacy of the Qing Dynasty, but it has its basis in the old imperial collection begun in the twelfth century, toward the end of the Northern Song. It even includes the painting and the calligraphy of the imperial artist Huizong, who ruled poorly and painted birds and flowers well at the very time that Li Qingzhao and her husband were amassing their great collection. It was Huizong who lost his throne in the invasions that cost Li Qingzhao her husband and her collection. A better artist and connoisseur than emperor, Huizong ended up a captive of the Jurchen; the collector himself became a prize to be collected.

From its beginnings until the present day, this collection has been entwined with political struggle, which follows the passion for possession. The collection is not simply art: it is also a trophy, a symbol of the succession of rule and political legitimacy. In the twentieth century, the flavor of passionate possession has changed. During the Ming and Qing Dynasties, from the fourteenth century through the nineteenth century, the emperor was the center of power, to whom great works of art flowed in a steady stream. Yet the emperors were not conservators of national treasures. They were the ultimate private collectors. The emperor could scribble on any painting he wished and stamp it with his seal, knowing that this was not defacement but part of a chain of ownership and appreciation that increased a work's value and supported its authenticity. The emperor could—to the horror of archaeologists and art historians—even have an inscription carved in an ancient jade disk.

For the collector-autarch, "possessing the past" clearly involved possession in the sense in which we normally understand the term. Ownership still included the right to use the possession and even to give it away. The principle of "gathering and scattering" was not entirely lost:

Stephen Owen is the editor and translator of *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (W.W. Norton).

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works still dribbled out, given to court favorites and princes, pilfered by eunuchs, and plundered in times of dynastic upheaval. Museum possession, however, is something else.

The Republic of China inherited the Qing imperial collection by right of conquest, and it clung to it with heroic tenacity. Just as Li Qingzhao and her husband fled invaders southward with their collection, the Palace Museum collection was removed from Beijing to Nanjing in Shanghai in 1933, and then to Nanjing in 1936, before the Japanese took the city in the Second World War (which was not yet a world war). It was then hurried out of Nanjing just before the Japanese attack on that city, trucked to western China and finally, just before the Communist takeover, transported to Taiwan, where it was buried in tunnels in a mountainside. The present Palace Museum sits atop that vast trove of buried treasure contained in 4,000 large crates, displaying to the public only a small fraction of what it holds in its possession.

The Palace Museum is a trustee. It owns without an owner; it can still acquire, but it cannot give away. The museum does not write on the paintings, and it does not stamp blank spaces with its seal. Instead it places its inscriptions on cards by the side, to be read and ultimately thrown away. (I suspect that the museum's sense of trusteeship is shared by the private collector in modern times, who sees his personal collection as only a blessed interval before museum acquisition.) Sitting atop its treasure caves, the Palace Museum can serve as an allegory for museums in general. The proper phrase for its mission might best be not "possessing the past," but "warehousing the past," holding many rare objects and displaying a few of them to a general public.

If one presses the question of ownership—for whom does the museum act as trustee?—the answer must be something like: for every one of us. The museum's holdings seem to denote collective cultural possession. For this reason, the intellectuals of Taiwan, protesting the shipment of the Palace Museum's treasures to the United States, saw those works as "ours." When one collectivizes possession into an "ours," however, a large question arises regarding the nature of collective possession. Who, exactly, constitutes the collective? The attempts of the present German government to get back Schliemann's treasures of "Troy" is a fine case in point. Whether the claimants are the Russians, the Germans, the Turks or even the Greeks, all such claims of ownership come down to the assertion that "we stole it fair and square." If you begin to trace the transfers of title, you find that the treasures in many museums are plunder. "National" governments have appropriated the private holdings of rulers and aristocrats and taken whatever fine things they could dig out of the ground in their own countries and elsewhere. Conquering nations have stolen from the conquered and seized the ground over buried treasures. The national or ethnic collectives in whose name ownership is claimed, then, keep shifting through history.

The question of ownership is no less interesting when considering the Palace Museum. The older parts of the collection were "stolen fair and square" by the Qing ruling house, just as the entire imperial Qing collection was taken in turn by the Republic, which could then claim that the works belonged to the "Chinese people." Then the Communists conquered China and could claim to represent the Chinese people. But the Guomindang, the party that dominated the Republic first on the mainland and after 1947 on Taiwan, made off with the Palace Museum collection; and its claim to those works is tied together with its own quixotic claim to represent the Chinese people as a government-in-exile.

The Palace Museum in Taipei is an institution that exists to possess the collection. The display of the works that it

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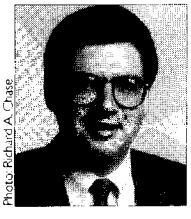

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houses is entirely secondary to its reason for being, and is done for political purposes, domestic and international. The collection is "cultural capital" in the most tangible sense—a hoard that far exceeds the possibility of its display. Sometimes the buried works are made available to scholars, but such scholars are only an imaginative necessity that justifies continued possession and conservation—in case someone should pose the innocent question, "Why have you kept all those works of art buried for half a century?" We are reminded of that phase in the lives of Li Qingzhao and her husband when their collection became an obsession, when the gratifications of possession came to loom larger than the pleasure in the beauty of the things possessed.

To survive, however, the institution must serve the government that supports it. The exhibition of choice treasures is literally a display of "possessing the past": a claim to the inheritance of China's cultural legacy. Domestic display has been particularly important, part of an ongoing program to persuade the populace of Taiwan that they are China and not just another Chinese-speaking country. Serving this program, the Palace Museum has deployed its fragile Song silk landscape paintings theatrically, unrolling them on rare occasions to heighten the effect of cultural awe. No wonder Taiwan's intellectuals were incensed to discover that these works were being shipped to the United States for general and extended viewing. What had been a successful strategy for producing veneration in Taipei backfired when the works were to be used for international cultural advertisement.

On one level, the rage in Taiwan is understandable. Works which are too delicate (they have been told) to bear the light of steady viewing are now being unrolled, illuminated, gawked at and rerolled many times, all to display Chinese culture to a world that barely understands it. The reality of the exhibition, of course, is far more complicated. One such complication is the number of ethnic Chinese in the audience at the Met—old women in wheelchairs pushed by daughters who describe for them the exhibits in cases that the mothers are placed too low to see, young people after "Chinese school" recognizing with great pleasure a few characters in a piece of calligraphy. What is a rare opportunity in Taiwan is a unique opportunity in New York. And insofar as the claim to ownership of these works is on behalf of the Chinese people, it is worth keeping in mind that the United States, too, has become another home for the Chinese people—though also a home for many others, who were also present.

Grand, encyclopedic exhibitions have their value, drawing interest by the sheer spectacle of the occasion. Their virtue lies in getting people to look at what they might otherwise overlook. In some ways, though, they are troubling enterprises; and the problems that they present have much to do with collecting, the politics of possession and the frailty of old things. In such an exhibition, the veneration of the works as relics overwhelms the experience of art. (Thus Qianlong's imperial knickknacks can be juxtaposed with the genius of the eccentric painter Bada Shanren.) And such exhibitions are an itinerary in which each thing displayed becomes an isolated object of contemplation, making the same kind of claim on our attention. We emerge at last from the eighteenth century exhausted, with a sense of satiety and completion.

After viewing the show at the Met, I went to the China Wing, which houses the museum's regular collection of Chinese art. Far less can be displayed in its very limited space, but crowded together there were famous paintings and works of calligraphy every bit the equal of most of the pieces sent over from the Palace Museum. And in contrast to the crowds that made it difficult to move or view more than fragments of the great handscrolls in the exhibition, the China Wing was deserted except for myself and one elderly couple. Clearly the "Splendors" have a value of their own that goes beyond simply viewing works of art.

Although the aura of relics is enhanced by age and fragility, the Northern Song masterpieces, the paintings that were the core of political contention, represent a limit that asks us to reflect on the folkways of the visual arts. I do not know what the 900-year-old excretions of insect larvae can bear—how many rollings and unrollings, how much light, how much air. Entropy is surely at work. Nature gave the silkworm a remarkable durability in the threads of its cocoon, but it did not intend those threads to last a millennium. Sooner or later the great Northern Song silk paintings will fall apart. The question is only how best to spend the time that remains to them.

All the hoarding, hiding and plundering, all the wonder that such an exhibition inspires, is bound up with the cult of the "original thing." (Never mind that many of the Palace Museum's treasures are acknowledged or unacknowledged copies of lost originals.) In Andrew Solomon's fine article on the politics of the exhibition in *The New York Times Magazine*, the question of reproduction occurs several times. It was proposed to send high-quality reproductions instead of the originals; and the fear was also expressed that the Met would keep the originals and return perfect reproductions (under the mad assumption that the reproductions would be of such quality that they would deceive the Palace Museum staff). The suggestion to send good reproductions rather than originals was, of course, rejected: if any reproduction could substitute for the original, then the very enterprise of the museum—to possess unique objects—would be endangered.

Let us set aside the clichés of the visual arts and try to be honest. The quality of reproduction is now such that in many cases they can adequately replace the original. Indeed, reproductions of ink paintings on paper are effectively indistinguishable from the original—except, perhaps, for the cracks in the paper, which do not represent the original state of the original. The reproduction of monochrome ink painting and calligraphy is the apotheosis of xeroxing. I am not speaking here of the scroll reproductions on sale at the Met, many of which seemed poor, perhaps willfully to reinforce a sense of distinction between the original and the copy. These were sold for prices greater than the cost of a round-trip to Taiwan, a night in a decent hotel, and the better reproductions available there. Reproduction actually costs relatively little, and the price diminishes in proportion to the number of copies made. If done on a wide enough scale, every moderately affluent household in the United States and Taiwan could afford to purchase copies of the greater part of this exhibition, though they could not afford enough large rooms in which to display them.

If the pieces in "Splendors of Imperial China" had all been first-rate reproductions, hardly anyone would have been able to tell; and those who could tell would not have been looking at the art but looking for the telltale traces that betray age. So long as the audience was deceived into believing that they were seeing the originals, I doubt that their pleasure and awe would have been in any way diminished. But then hang up one of those huge museum banners announcing to the public "Splendors of Imperial China In Reproduction," and the crowds would disappear.

Each copy of a poem or novel, even in the cheapest paperback, *is* the original, and its value as literary art is unchanged. But this is an accident of history: writing is a highly successful technology of reproduction. Now the technology of re-

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production is finally catching up with the visual arts. Perhaps it is not yet up to the texture of oil paint or the gloss of Song porcelain, but it is more than adequate for ink painting, all the world's drawings, and works in many color media. As visual arts are disseminated in prints and books, the museum is increasingly left with the sole distinction of possessing the "aura" of the relic. This helps to explain how Qianlong's miniature curio cabinet, at best worthy of an imperial tag sale, can bear the same crowded scrutiny as a great artist's work of unique vision and daring.

This distinction between the pleasure in art and the pleasure in the relic, in collecting, in "possessing the past," is the lesson of Li Qingzhao's memoir. Before their collection took shape as an institution of possession that dominated her husband's life and hers, Li Qingzhao described a time when the newly married couple took a very different kind of pleasure in art. "On the first and fifteenth day of every month, my husband would get a short vacation from the Academy; he would ... go to the market at Xiang-guo Temple, where he would buy fruit and rubbings of inscriptions. When he brought these home, we would sit facing one another, rolling them out before us, examining and munching." The fruit is necessary to this idyllic scene, a carelessness of dribbling juices. (And the artworks are themselves reproductions in the technology of the time, rubbings of stone inscriptions.) As I viewed the handscrolls in the exhibition, I looked for juice stains.

Aura is something that we grant to works. It is a donation from our cultural training that helps us see, read and listen well. It is a willingness to make space for magic. A speech in a play by Shakespeare can have aura no matter what the physical quality of the edition. A film can have aura, and who can even guess what its physical "original" is. For the traditional visual arts the question is whether the art to which we grant aura should reside in the image or in the material. I grant that cash value combined with image saturates the unique material object with aura; but as some of these frail old things get ready to take their leave of us, it is perhaps time for the culture to learn that the art lives on in the reproducible image and is not tied to the physical thing.

But fine reproductions of the pieces in "Splendors of Imperial China" are not yet readily available to be enjoyed with ripe pomegranates, and so we must have the originals, replete with a more conventional aura, in the touring exhibition. And they offer a visual pleasure that is more profound than their status as relics.

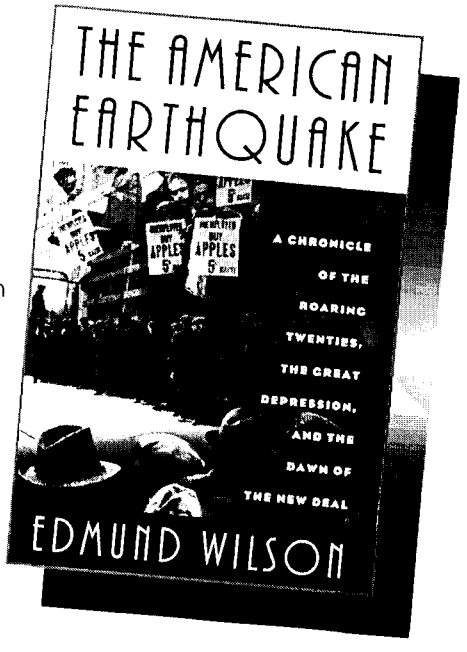
For all its immensity, this exhibition is only a tiny sampling of examples of all kinds of arts across a span of three millennia. If one of these millennia, between antiquity and the Song, is only scantily represented, the sheer volume and variety still leaves us with a sense of adequacy. For any category of Chinese art that is represented here by a few pieces, the Palace Museum could mount an entire show. The few exquisite porcelains here are among the finest pieces from room after room of porcelains on display in Taipei, which are only a fraction of the museum's holdings. Limitation is as important to displaying fine things as good lighting. Here, in this exhibition, the works can be noticed; but footsore in the Palace Museum in Taipei, one looks toward room after room and thinks "More dishes!"

Ancient China is represented by its hard and durable things. There are massive ancient bronzes, the dinnerware of the ancestors, with monstrous faces that dissolve into the sheer pleasure of intricate pattern. Some pieces once held stews and others held millet ale, from which the clans feasted, both their living members and the spirits of their forebears. There are the great disks of jade, the *bi*, displayed by ancient rulers as objects of great prestige. To show his favor and confidence, the king might grant one of his nobles a finely decorated chariot and horses: these were soft things, which have long since melted away, but the fine bronze trappings survive and may be seen.

Hard things give the collection its continuity—bronze mirrors, jade tablets carved with inscriptions, and later the porcelains, which bring us up to early modern times. It is from the Song Dynasty that we begin to have soft things surviving, paintings and calligraphy on silk and paper. The earliest of these were among the objects of the most heated political controversy. You will not see the famous "Travelers Amid Streams and Mountains" by Fan K'uan, with its massive central mountain that looms over the tiny traveler at the bottom. But perhaps this painting draws even more attention to itself by its absence than it would have by its presence; it has been much photographed and much reproduced so that everyone will see what they are missing.

One of the Song's hard but fragile things seems to offer comment on the poise of art between permanence and material ruin. In the center of a Southern Song teabowl of black Jizhou ware, slightly specked and rimmed with gold, there is a crumbling golden-colored leaf. It is evidently the remains of a real leaf somehow fused between the glazes. Like those Dutch still lifes of decaying fruit,

The heart of this dazzling collection (most of which was originally published in *The New Republic* between 1923 and 1934) is a book called *American Jitters,* which *The New York Times* called "the best reporting that the period of depression has brought forth in the United States." In prose that is by turns dramatic and naturalistic, inflammatory and evocative, shocking and droll, Wilson paints an unforgettable panorama of a catastrophic era, and, perhaps inadvertently, a self-portrait comparable to *The Education of Henry Adams.*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it arrests the dissolution of transient things, but in a medium which is, in its own way, as brittle as the leaf it recalls.

The crumbling leaf in the center of the bowl also reminds us of the degree to which this particular art is altered in becoming a relic on display. It is certain that the survival of such an object is due to the fact that it is a relic: the years of careful warehousing and the reverence in its treatment have preserved it from the accidental jarring that would once and for all shatter the bowl and the arrested image of the crumbling leaf. Once, however, it was used as a bowl, it was filled with tea; and through the liquid colored by powdered leaves the golden-colored image of a crumbling leaf would appear to the tea-drinker. In that context the image seen through liquid was a point where transient nature, its use and its consumption, and the permanence of the image in art came together. The bowl was meant to be held in the hands. The pleasures of touch, taste and scent were supposed to accompany the pleasure of the eyes in the striking image; and the image itself was meant to appear only gradually through liquid, in the process of drinking. As beautiful as the bowl is on its pedestal in the exhibition, carefully illuminated and the center of a circle of viewers, it has paid the price of dryness.

Fondling was an important component of traditional Chinese comment on aesthetic experience. One of the terms for enjoyment, *wan*, often suggests holding an object in the hands. The jades now protected in glass cases were as much prized for their tactile qualities as for their shape and their luster. In her idyllic description of the experience of art, Li Qingzhao speaks not of "looking at" the rubbings, but of "unrolling" them. All those beautiful porcelains were also fashioned for the touch. We must be grateful to those conservators who have gone to such efforts to save these things across centuries; but the objects can be reached now only by the feathery touch of the eye. And the Northern Song paintings cannot long stand the light that makes the eyes' touch possible.

Some paintings in the exhibition invite museum display. The great life-size portraits of emperors and some of the landscapes were done on a scale that anticipated display on palace walls; now only the architecture of a museum accommodates itself to such painting. The long handscrolls, by contrast, which can easily run the full length of a museum room, were never meant to be seen this way. They were gradually unrolled leftward and rolled up on the right, offering visual surprises in the mimesis of movement through space. And the album leaves, masterpieces that sometimes almost visually disappear on the scale of a museum wall, were also meant for intimate viewing by the connoisseur.

With so many big paintings and long paintings and colorful paintings, it is easy to pass quickly over these small album paintings. Go to these and stop awhile; the crowds are usually thinner there. They are a history of Chinese painting in their own right, from the pale Southern Song landscape, so misted over with ink wash that it seems ready to fade out of sight, to the brilliant and highly individual minimalism of the seventeenth-century Bada Shanren, who seems to be "writing" visual representations. In the midpoint of this chronology you might notice an album leaf by the Ming court painter Sun Long, working with colored ink in such a way that the outline of the thing dissolves. It is a painting of a pomegranate in dissolution, broken open so that the seeds are showing and seeming as if a bite had been taken out of it. It is a messily intimate representation of a supremely messy fruit; and it recalls Li Qingzhao's memory of a relaxed, domestic pleasure in art, a pleasure not weighed down by the burden of being a relic or a treasure or a patrimony or a representation of "Chinese civilization," but inviting the viewer to taste and to look. •

After Strange Gods

BY JAMES WOOD

T.S. Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form by Anthony Julius

(Cambridge University Press, 308 pp., $49.95)

I.

T.S. Eliot was an anti-Semite. Anthony Julius's program is to assert the centrality of Eliot's anti-Semitism in his thought. Anti-Semitism, Julius says, was Eliot's inspiration, his muse. He was that rare anti-Semite, one who was "able to place his anti-Semitism at the service of his art"; he "trained himself to be an anti-Semite." To conjure this centrality, Julius argues that anti-Semitism occurs at the heart of some of Eliot's greatest poems. Julius is brave and occasionally right. His anger has the glow of righteousness. But it is the color of simplicity. His book is tendentious, misleading and unremittingly hostile. He has written an unstable book about an unstable subject; reading it is like watching a maniac trying to calm an hysteric.

First, there must be a conspiracy, and some long corridors. Julius contends that Eliot's anti-Semitism has been scandalously ignored or apologized for. "Almost from the start, dissenting voices were rarely heard, and lacked influence." Julius passes over the considerable amount of influential criticism there has been of Eliot's anti-Semitism. Since the publication of Eliot's three anti-Semitic poems in 1920, and certainly since the publication of Eliot's University of Virginia lectures in 1934, in a volume titled *After Strange Gods*, readers have been vividly aware of Eliot's tendencies. Stephen Spender attacked Eliot's anti-Semitism in 1935, and Lionel Trilling alluded to it 1943, followed, over the next decade, by critical discussions in *The Saturday Review of Literature*, *Partisan Review* and the *Times Literary Supplement*. In the last twenty years, hardly a year has gone by in which a book or essay has not appeared that has mentioned, and often censured, Eliot's anti-Semitism and its historical and cultural roots. The critics have included Hyam Maccoby, Roger Kojecky, Russell Kirk, William Empson, George Steiner, Christopher Ricks, Leslie Fiedler, Kenneth Asher and Cynthia Ozick.

Julius announces that he is an admirer of Eliot's poetry, and that it his admiration that draws him to this delicate subject. But his book is violently critical. Being praised by Julius is a brisk affair. The closest the book gets to the free pastures of praise is this: "It is in the *Four Quartets*, and not in his prose criticism, that Eliot's conservatism finds its most considered, cogent expression." Julius's business is to paint Eliot as racist, misogynist and anti-Semitic. The idea seems to be that the three demons are separate but pull together, like hard-working chefs, to prepare the feast of prejudice.

But things are a little undercooked.

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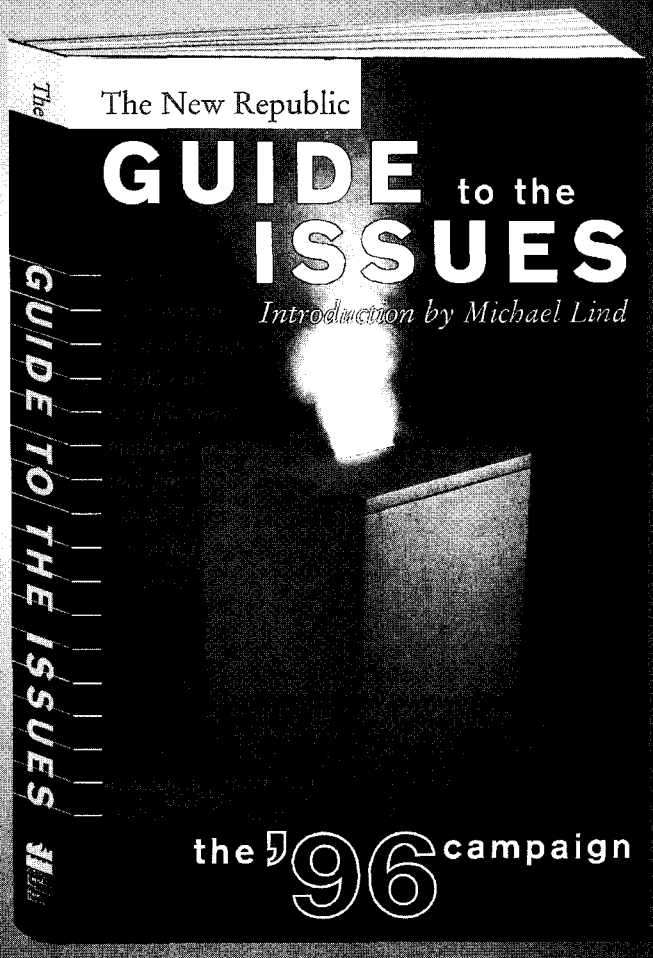

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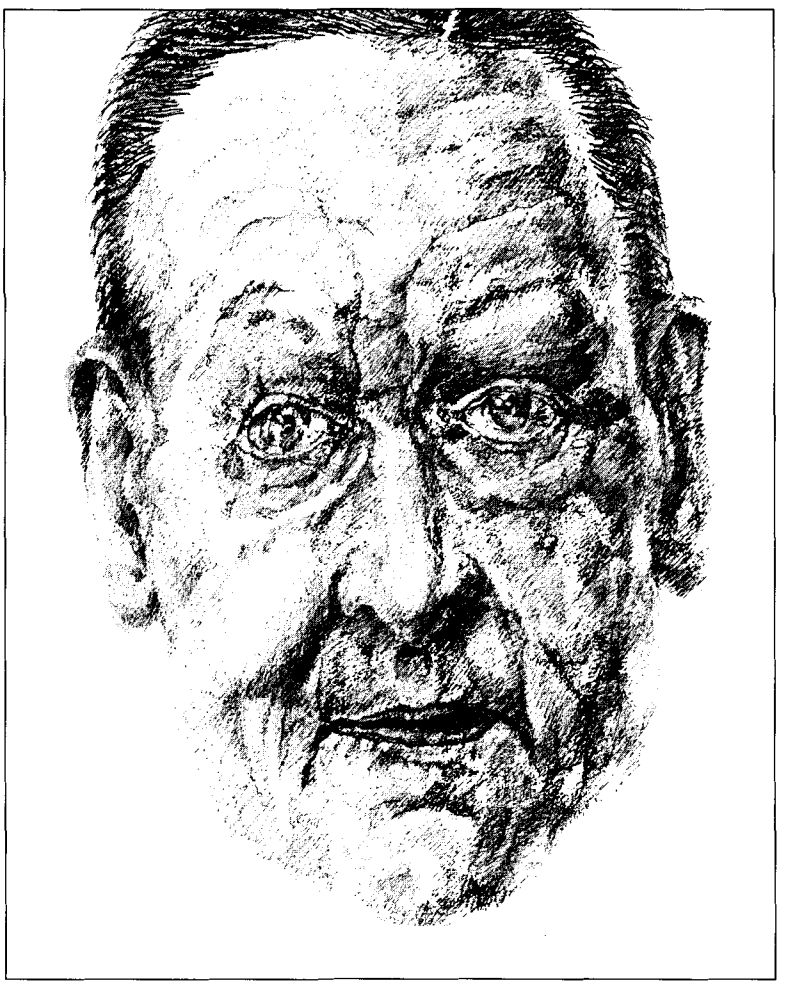
Thus Eliot's racism, for Julius, is as much a matter of silence as noise. His lectures to the University of Virginia, since they claim the racial uniformity of Virginia, "overlook the entire Black population of the South." Julius then reaches for two famous lines from "The Dry Salvages," the third poem of *Four Quartets*:

> Time the destroyer is time the preserver,
> Like the river with its cargo of dead negroes,
> cows and chicken coops

Eliot grew up in St. Louis, and as an old man recalled seeing the Mississippi in flood, when it flows at "such speed that no man or beast can survive it." In his essay "American Literature and the American Language" (1953), he called the Mississippi "the universal river of human life," and his noticing of the dead Negroes catches the river's grim universal reach—the river of life and the river of death. But Julius is scandalized that Eliot allows the dead Negroes to be "noted without emotion.... Without censure the lines invoke the heritage of a commercial ('cargo') slave culture. This racism of prose and poetry [i.e. *After Strange Gods* and "The Dry Salvages"] amounts to the adoption of the Confederate cause." It is true that Eliot praised the conservative Agrarians of the early '30s; but Eliot, the frail bloom of Boston Unitarianism, one of whose cherished books was his abolitionist grandfather's history of a black slave, could hardly be further from the surly Confederates. This is not merely a stubborn misreading of Eliot's lines (where "cargo" binds together humans and animals, and suggests how the river reduces those humans), but the kind of misreading that suggests the ticking of an ideological metronome. "Without censure": Julius expects Eliot's poetry to make literary reparation for the slave trade. It is not allowed simply to describe.

Throughout his book, Julius is in such a rage that he whales his evidence into compliance. Consider this comment by Eliot on the poetry of Isaac Rosenberg, a celebrated British poet who died in the First World War, and whom Eliot called, in 1953, "the most remarkable of the British poets killed in that war": "The poetry of Isaac Rosenberg ... does not only owe its distinction to its being Hebraic: but because it is Hebraic it is a contribution to English literature. For a Jewish poet to be able to write like a Jew, in western Europe and in a western European language, is almost a miracle." Eliot's meaning is clear. Rosenberg was a distinguished English poet, but his particular addition to English literature was that he retained a Jewishness that was not assimilated; and this retention, within the pressure that the English poetic tradition exerts to surrender one's literary Jewishness, was almost miraculous.



T.S. ELIOT BY DAVID SCHORR FOR THE NEW REPUBLIC

For Julius, however, this is an anti-Semitic "libel" that allows "Jews an aesthetic sense, and thus a measure of creativity, but deriving only from Jewish tradition." He follows Eliot's quote with this paragraph:

> Eliot's eccentric praise of the Jewish poet is consistent with his larger deprecations. "That a Jew can do this!" registers the surprise of the anti-Semite. What is it to write like a Jew? Richard Wagner explains: "The Jew speaks the language of the country in which he has lived from generation to generation, but he always speaks it as a foreigner." A Jew cannot compose German music; when he purports to do so, he deceives. The Jewish composer could only compose music as a Jew by drawing on the "ceremonial music" of the synagogue service, a "nonsensical gurgling, yodelling and cackling." These "rhythms ... dominate his musical imagination"; they are irresistible. So while the talented Jewish composer is disqualified by his race from composing German music, he is disqualified by his talent from composing Jewish music. Rosenberg was luckier. He was able, by "almost a miracle," to write in English "like a Jew." The difference between Eliot's anti-Semitism and Wagner's is defined, on this point, by the possibility of this "miracle."

This is characteristic of Julius's method. A passage of Eliot's is dropped into a stream of vicious anti-Semitic crudity, in the hope that the waters will mix. Almost every page of this book, which lavishly flows with examples of the anti-Semitism of people other than Eliot, attempts this guilt by immersion. But Julius makes Eliot mean the opposite of what he is saying. Wagner claims that the Jew tries to speak as a native but always reveals himself as a foreigner. For this reason he is incapable of great work. But Eliot praises Rosenberg for precisely the opposite quality. Rosenberg has retained a foreignness which Eliot considers a contribution and a miracle of self-preservation.

If anything, Eliot implies that the Jew will always speak as a native, and that the struggle will be to speak as a foreigner. And Eliot is careful to suggest that Rosenberg's foreignness is not his only quality: "does not only owe its distinction to its being Hebraic." Julius reads the passage as if the phrase "like a Jew" were simply not in the text, as if the passage read: "For a Jewish poet to be able to write in western Europe and in a western European language, is almost a miracle." This may be Wagner's belief, but it is palpably the opposite of Eliot's. Eliot is not praising Rosenberg for being able to write at all. The difference between Eliot's anti-Semitism and Wagner's

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anti-Semitism is not defined by the word "miracle"; it is defined by Eliot's not being, in this instance, anti-Semitic. At worst, Eliot's comment suggests a heightened awareness of Jewishness.

A critic who is inattentive to language in this way will not seem trustworthy, and Julius's book contains many bullied readings. Some of them are flicked off. In a brief discussion of Pound's anti-Semitism in the *Cantos*, Julius suggests that where Pound was incontinent, Eliot was economical. "Take Jewish Vienna: while *The Waste Land* renders it 'unreal' ... the *Cantos* brood obsessively on it." In a book one of whose themes is the silencing of Jews and the literary triumphing over them, we are supposed to attend here to Eliot's calm silencing of Jewish Vienna in *The Waste Land*. He renders Jewish Vienna "unreal," and hence unreal also the Jewish lives it contains.

Alas, for Julius, nowhere in *The Waste Land* is Vienna marked as Jewish. The city's name appears only once, as one of a list of cities that may stand for the fragmentation, or perhaps the disordered superabundance, of civilization: "Jerusalem Athens Alexandria/ Vienna London/ Unreal." Nor, of course, does Vienna's unreality, even if it were anywhere identified as Jewish, have anything to do with silencing. Earlier in the poem, London is called "unreal" in the famous, bleak, tolling passage in which the poet sees commuters walking across London Bridge:

> Unreal City,
> Under the brown fog of a winter dawn,
> A crowd flowed over London Bridge,
> so many,
> I had not thought death had undone
> so many.

The slow, lovely cortège of these lines makes hidden reference to Baudelaire and Dante: Baudelaire's vision is of a city of phantoms, Dante's is of the living dead, those who know neither good nor evil. Eliot's London is unreal not because its people are silenced or dismissed, but because they are phantoms moving through a city of dreams. It is not that Eliot's modern city-dwellers have been oppressed, or thieved of reality, by the poet; Eliot's point is that their lives do not have enough reality.

Eliot was not Wagner. He combined two strands of anti-Semitism: the fashionable contempts of his age and an unfashionable belief that whatever was outside the Christian Church was heretical and, literally, deadly. "If Christianity goes, the whole of our culture goes," he wrote in 1939, in *The Idea of a Christian Society*. "If you will not have God ... you should pay your respects to Hitler or Stalin." Eliot's ecclesiastical petrification is wary of competing religions and hostile to all secularism. His critical prose, usually dementedly patient, is stirred to animus whenever those anti-religionists, H.G. Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Aldous Huxley or Bertrand Russell, stray into his cloisters. ("These two depressing life-forcers" was his estimation of Russell and Huxley.) Jews, and especially "free-thinking Jews," take their place in this procession of unfortunates.

In a notorious passage in *After Strange Gods*, a book that he did not allow to be republished, Eliot defined his Christian society. "The population should be homogeneous; where two or more cultures exist in the same place they are likely to be either fiercely self-conscious or both to become adulterate. What is still more important is unity of religious background; and reasons of race and religion combine to make any large number of free-thinking Jews undesirable." This was uttered in 1933. It is indefensible.

It sounds flippant, or worse, to suggest that Eliot did not want to be taken seriously at this moment; but Eliot's prose has a tendency toward a mocking chilliness of tone. He is at times puerile, delighting in pulling the wings off the sensitive secular insect. In *Notes Towards The Definition of Culture* (1948), he suggests that to discuss the preservation of Welsh as a language is "really as much as to ask

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whether the Welsh, *qua* Welsh, are of any use?" Does one not feel him here relishing in nudity? Similarly, a footnote in his Norton lectures of 1932-33 calmly proposes that "the Roman and Communist idea of an index of prohibited books seems to me perfectly sound in principle. It is a question (a) of the goodness and universality of the cause, (b) of the intelligence that goes to the application." In "Thoughts After Lambeth" he likes to strike a Kierkegaardian note: "You will never attract the young by making Christianity easy; but a good many can be attracted by finding it difficult; difficult both to the disorderly mind and to the unruly passions."

This language, with its pellets of precision and its frozen demeanor, shocks contemporary readers. More than a century has elapsed since writers pronounced like this. In tone and in thought, however, there is little here that would have seemed unusual to Cardinal Newman. Eliot savors the shock of a word like "intelligence," aware that most readers will find "intelligence," in the matter of censorship and book-burning, trivial or irrelevant. Similarly, he squeezes the word "undesirable" for its full sap of hidden prejudice, while holding the word to its exact volume of verifiable meaning: it is not that a concentration of free-thinking Jews is grotesque or impossible or disgusting, but it is not desirable, not ideal. This language buys its shocking effects through its glacial reticence. Of course, Eliot believed what he was saying in these instances; but he took pleasure, one suspects, at the idea that he might not be believed by others.

Julius, following several critics, argues that Eliot was tellingly attracted, when discussing non-Christian groups, to the excoriation of the Jews. But there is little evidence for this—all we have are the single passage in *After Strange Gods* that I have quoted and a footnote in *Notes* about the unfortunate nature of some of the "culture-contact" between Jews and Christians, which was revised thus in 1962: "It seems to be highly desirable that there should be close culture-contact between devout and practising Christians and devout and practising Jews." All this mutuality of devoutness is sickly, of course, and merely adds free-thinking Christians to the free-thinking Jews already excluded. But in truth, Jews are barely noticed in Eliot's writing about Christianity, and when they are noticed, they are not awarded the fear and loathing that is reserved for Christian secularists such as Russell and Wells.

Eliot's obliviousness to the Jewish plight during the 1930s was a sin, but it was a different kind of sin from the anti-Semitism that Julius alleges. *The Idea of a Christian Society*, lectures published in 1939, makes no reference to Jews, and we may find this cruel or insensitive; but it does not, as Julius claims, "disparage" Jews, or only by omission. I do not mean to soften the obnoxiousness of Eliot's anti-Semitism, only to insist against its centrality in Eliot's thought. Christian orthodoxy was his rock; all unorthodoxies issued from enemy territory.

Eliot's Christianity, he explained, was not emotional and religious, but intellectual and dogmatic. Reversing St. Paul, he aphorized that in Christianity the spirit killeth, but the letter giveth life. Eliot's family was of a distinguished Unitarian New England line. Unitarianism, from a dogmatic Christian position, is a religion of air. It is full of spirit and bereft of letter. It denies both the reality of the Trinity and Jesus's claim to be the Son of God. It is optimistic, with a spiny ethical emphasis on charity and good works. Eliot's grandfather, the Reverend William Greenleaf Eliot, arrived in St. Louis from Harvard Divinity School and helped to found three schools, a university and a sanitary commission. William Empson speculated that Eliot's anti-Semitism was the embodiment of Eliot's hatred for his father, a Unitarian businessman.

Certainly, Eliot's Christianity—he was received into the Church of England in 1927—was the dark to Unitarianism's light. (Responding to a correspondent critical of his words about free-thinking Jews, Eliot replied that Judaism without belief and observation descends into "a mild and colourless form of Unitarianism.") Eliot plunged into the magma of religious proposition even as Unitarianism fled from it. He worked upwards from the bottom through a chain of black excruciations. As a consequence of Original Sin, man is essentially bad. Man's religious existence will thus be the worship of correction: "thought, study, mortification, sacrifice," as he once described it. Tending toward disorder, he must covet

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Cleaner bags of suits in the closet,
The finest European tailors circa
The Cold War, your glorious tuxedo
Supervising the digging of Berlin
Tunnels or meetings with the President—

His brother, Joe, a friend before
Harvard and the War, fellow skinny
Dippers caught by the cops off Marshfield
And later by death, yours last. The attendants
Were suitably grim, the gurney wheels
Quiet in the length of the dormitory hall.

Glad to meet the youthful scholars,
Hitler was ebullient, poured the drinks.
An invitation to the embassy. You wrote
A book on Yeats, prompted by your mentor,
Robert Hillyer. Eight years later,
Walking through the Fuehrer Bunker rubble

You saw the center had in fact held.
You knew the enemy so well, most times
You looked the part—elegant, spy-cultured
By the O.S.S. and Operation Paperclip,
Mixing it up with left wing artists,
Spiriting Nazi scientists to America.

You inspired uprisings and misinformation,
The popular fare of *The Saturday Evening Post*
Articles you knocked out on your Remington.
You got on well with Camus and Brecht,
Had a pretty wife that slept with both,
As you charted the regions of your borderless state.

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discipline. Politically, this will mean order, and the order provided by institutions. For the Christian, that institution is the Church. Where there is no Christianity, there is heresy, disorder, anarchy—"the anarchy of feeling," as he put it in his essay on Arnold and Pater. The Anglican thinkers whom Eliot admired, such as Richard Hooker (1554-1600) and Bishop Lancelot Andrewes (1555-1626), insisted on the oneness of the Church of England and the nation.

This may be cheerless, conservative, or reprehensible to many ears. But it is a vision of completeness, and what is outside it must seem incomplete. Eliot's anti-Semitism needs to be seen in this light. This was the mind that could write, about religious revivalism in the 1930s, that "religion can hardly revive, because it cannot decay." "It cannot decay": Eliot's faith is a hard faith, and we may wonder at the usefulness of a critic of Eliot who can write, as Julius writes, that "as late as *Notes* he was still insisting upon the determinative importance of Christianity," as if religion were like hypochondria, to be abandoned once secular medicines have brought release. *Of course* Eliot was "still insisting" on this importance: he could insist on nothing else, because he could see no other. He spoke of "the incredibility of every alternative to Christianity that offers itself," and he used the word with customary formality: he could not believe in an alternative.

Some of Eliot's anti-Semitism, then, is dogmatic Christianity's anti-Semitism—not the anti-Semitism of the Church (the riots, the superstitions, the discriminatory laws, the complicity with the Holocaust), but the anti-Semitism of Christ himself. It should not be controversial to say that Christianity must be structurally at odds with Judaism, and Judaism at odds with Christianity, for Christ claimed to be both a fulfillment and a supercession of the Old Testament: "Before Abraham was, I am." Jesus used Judaism to triumph over itself, which is the point of Jesus's disobedience of the laws of the Sabbath, a disobedience he justifies, when challenged by the Pharisees, by quoting David. For this illegality leads to a miracle: inside a synagogue, on the Sabbath, he cures a man with a withered arm, asking, "Is it lawful, on the sabbath days, to do good or to do evil, to save life or to destroy it?"

Julius, of course, rages against the anti-Semitism of St. John, Marcion, Tertullian and the early Church, and decides that "the desire to sever Christianity from its Jewish origins is a project of many anti-Semites." What this has to do with Eliot is never made clear, since Julius himself quotes Eliot stressing the connection of Judaism and Christianity. Eliot censured Simone Weil, whom he admired, for rejecting Israel. By "denying the divine mission of Israel," wrote Eliot, she also rejected "the foundation of the Christian Church." Now, it is characteristic not so much of Eliot as of his Christianity that Israel is seen as the provider of Christianity. This will offend those who care about such things; but this is not Eliot's anti-Semitism, it is Christianity's super-Semitism. Julius is blind to this theology of supercession and, typically, storms in hysterical squalls: "Here we are meant to infer that it was Israel's mission to found the Church; having done so, it should have dissolved itself" is his comment on Eliot's sentences. He offers no evidence for the second half of his allegation.

St. Luke gives one of the Christian Church's most cherished stories of Israel's "divine mission" in the second chapter of his gospel. It is known in the Christian liturgy as the Nunc Dimittis, and it is sung or spoken every day at the evening service called Evensong. Simeon, writes Luke, an old and devout man, "waiting for the consolation of Israel," is visited by the Holy Spirit, who reveals to him that he shall not die before seeing the Christ child. Taken to the temple where the infant Jesus is being circumcised, Simeon thanks God, saying: "Lord now lettest now thy servant depart in peace, according to thy word: For mine eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people...." The old man is ready to die, happy in the glory of Messianic completion.

Eliot put these words into verse in his poem "A Song For Simeon" (1928). The poem is spoken by Simeon, as "The Journey of the Magi" (1927) is spoken by one of the three wise men. It is a dramatic monologue. It is a frail, somewhat blanched poem; minor, but touching. Simeon prays that "the Infant, the still unspeaking and unspoken Word,/ Grant Israel's consolation/ To one who has eighty years and no to-morrow," and ends in one of those Eliotian dying falls, the words repeated like the repetitions of ritual, so as to become a religious nudging:

> I am tired with my own life and the lives of
> those after me,
> I am dying in my own death and the deaths
> of those after me.
> Let thy servant depart,
> Having seen thy salvation.

Eliot's poem is faithful to Luke, save for the addition of some hyacinths and Simeon's age. Eliot would not have altered what is a canonical piece of Christian liturgy; he offers his poem as a devout liturgy of its own kind. What mild Christian triumphalism there is in the poem—the Messiah who is Israel's consolation—is Luke's. And Luke's triumphalism has more to do with rejoicing, and with universal absolution, than with glee: "thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all people...."

But Julius, for whom the poem is obviously an obstacle (the anti-Semite poet who writes as a Jew), sees it as "another one of Eliot's triumphs over Jews." First, the title seems curdlingly significant: "The song is *for*, not *of*, Simeon.... The poem," he chides, "merits Alasdair MacIntyre's wider criticism: '[t]he attempt to speak for [Jews], even on behalf of that unfortunate fiction, the so-called Judeo-Christian tradition, is always deplorable.' "

Pass over the recollection that Eliot called one of his books, which contained an essay on the Elizabethan English divine, *For Lancelot Andrewes*. Pass over the thought that the critic who makes use of Alasdair MacIntyre's disparagement of the "so-called Judeo-Christian tradition" later attacks as anti-Semitic "the desire to sever Christianity from its Jewish origins." (Had Eliot called that tradition "so-called," Julius would stamp on him.) Because Julius has more: "Eliot gives the Jew lines that locate him, and by implication all Jews, wholly within the Christian drama. Incapable of denying its truth, but equally incapable of living that truth, Simeon welcomes death because his life is death." He continues: "Simeon does not know how to worship. Eliot allows him to condemn himself." Yet Simeon does not welcome death because his life is death, but because his life has been gloriously completed, messianically irradiated. He is located "wholly within the Christian drama" because, in a sense, he, like Israel, has been Christianized through his witnessing of the Messiah. He has been baptized into futurity. That the Jews were "a chosen people" because they were chosen to be Christians is a familiar New Testament idea (see St. Peter). This is, within the tradition, glorious, and only an unbalanced or unintelligent or tendentious critic would see it as a sinister "triumph over Jews."

II.

After such knowledge, what forgiveness? Why should we trust a critic who seems to have such narrow access to justice? Julius is a lawyer by profession, and his prose style, when not sunk in troughs of research, has a judicial tread: "This is an argument one can respect, though I reject it." But more often he merely insinuates. The New Criticism of the 1950s and its legacy, he writes, still "protects Eliot." Eliot "wrote out of Symbolism for New Criticism"—as if Eliot, in Symbolism's dream-kitchen, were chop-

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ping poems to order. Or this, on Eliot's criticism: "At its best, it enlarged a particular tradition. In the context of his poetic achievement, however, Denis Donoghue's remark that its 'flaws ... or even its merits—are hardly worth talking about' is just." At its best, Eliot's criticism did not enlarge a particular tradition. It founded a new one: his own. But we know what Julius thinks of Eliot's "poetic achievement": "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" is misogynistic; *The Waste Land* silences Jewish Vienna; and *Four Quartets*, when not racist, as in "The Dry Salvages," offers merely the "most cogent, considered expression" of Eliot's conservatism, a vision which Julius finds repulsive and tacitly anti-Semitic.

It is in this light that we need to examine Julius's claim that Eliot's anti-Semitism appears at the heart of his finest poetry. Why should we believe such a claim when Julius can find nothing warm to say about the poetry that is not tainted with anti-Semitism? This untainted poetry, incidentally, includes all the work for which Eliot will be remembered: "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock"; *The Waste Land*; *Four Quartets*; "The Journey of the Magi." What, in Julius's vision, does "greatness" mean? How can anti-Semitism appear at the heart of a greatness which Julius seems to feel does not exist? It is not credible that Julius, the ferret of all forms of prejudice, would find Eliot's non-anti-Semitic poems to be somehow lacking, while finding Eliot's anti-Semitic poems (there are three, only) to be great or virtuosic. This would surely be perverse. But this is Julius's strategy, and it inevitably raises the suspicion in the reader that Julius is not telling the truth, that he likes none of the poetry, but that he needs to inflate the importance and the quality of Eliot's three anti-Semitic poems in order to be able to argue anti-Semitism's centrality in Eliot's work, and its thorough entanglement with Eliot's best poetry.

In other words, the better the poetry in which anti-Semitism occurs, the better the anti-Semitism for Julius's case. For were Eliot's three anti-Semitic poems to be seen as minor, then so would Eliot's anti-Semitism. The three poems are: "Gerontion," "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar" and "Sweeney Among the Nightingales." They do not offer attractive reading, and Julius is at his best when supplying the dismal tradition of abuse from which Eliot's lines spring. In the best of the poems, "Gerontion," an old man, confused, bitter and frantic for the fertility of order, casts about himself and dribbles allusions to Lancelot Andrewes, Henry Adams, Job, St. Matthew's gospel, the Elizabethan poets:

> My house is a decayed house,
> And the Jew squats on the window sill,
> the owner,
> Spawned in some estaminet of Antwerp,
> Blistered in Brussels, patched and peeled
> in London.

These lines cannot be mitigated. True, "Gerontion" is a dramatic monologue, and the old man is perhaps a bitterer anti-Semite than Eliot. (This is the usual argument in favor of Eliot's innocence, made most recently by Christopher Ricks.) But what we know of Eliot's wider anti-Semitism allows us to read, without unreasonable forcing, these lines as simultaneously lines of dramatic monologue and lines congruent with Eliot's own internal monologue. More devastatingly, Eliot originally published the poem with "Jew" in lower case ("jew"), enriching the typography only in 1963, when the Jew suddenly walked tall in his own capital. This emendation is an admission of guilt. It was not Gerontion who changed the typeface, it was Eliot.

Still, these are the only anti-Semitic lines in the poem, and though their foulness forces an arrest on us, we have to be able to free ourselves. "Gerontion" is a poem with an anti-Semitic rash, but the rash is confined to a limb. It is a poem blemished. One cannot say this for "Burbank with a Baedeker: Bleistein with a Cigar," which fawns at the Gentile reader, slobbering anti-Semitism. Bleistein, the Jewish-American tourist, ("Chicago Semite Viennese") is ridiculed, and the poem rises to this peak:

> The rats are underneath the piles.
> The Jew is underneath the lot.

"Sweeney Among The Nightingales" does not crawl with distaste in quite the same way, though it features "Rachel *née* Rabinovitch" who "Tears at the grapes with murderous paws."

Julius's discussion of the anti-Semitism in these three poems is valuable, though he does not relinquish his habit of mummifying all his details in strips of historical research. One notices, though, that while he states the quality of these poems as poems, his bag of superlatives is hardly full. While hating the anti-Semitism, he is forced to claim that the lines in "Gerontion" "economically render" various anti-Semitic themes. A little later, he refers to these "charged, economical lines." Later still, he compares Pound's anti-Semitism unfavorably with "the charged economy of Eliot's anti-Semitism." In "Sweeney," he writes, Eliot, "with great virtuosity ... turns that material [i.e. anti-Semitic clichés] into art. He compresses it into a single, powerfully charged sentence." But this "art" appears to have only two qualities for Julius: it is economical and it is charged (and this latter comes to us by definition anyway: anti-Semitic lines are bound to be "charged").

Julius entraps himself. He must argue, on the one hand, that Eliot's poetic anti-Semitism is indebted to anti-Semitic clichés (Jews as rats), but he must also argue, on the other hand, that the poetry is not itself clichéd. For if the prejudice allegedly at the heart of Eliot's poetry were not original, it would not be great poetry. Inevitably, these two categories, cliché and originality, begin to slide toward each other, and at one point Julius admits that "Gerontion"'s squatting Jew, "in his inability to find any permanent place of rest, is also Eliot's gesture toward that most fatigued of cultural clichés, the Wandering Jew. He gives the cliché a malignant twist in "Gerontion," and a comic twist in "Burbank."

There are readers of Eliot for whom these early poems, written before *The Waste Land*, are Eliot's most complex and daring. The poetry after 1920, for these people, is a trail gone cold. But surely Eliot's greatest poetry is the poetry after 1920, which is the poetry with no anti-Semitism in it. Is it impossible for an anti-Semitic poem to be a great poem? No, but it is probably harder for such a poem to be great, and Eliot's three poems provide the evidence. If we look at them as poems—one of Eliot's constant injunctions in the criticism that Julius deems negligible—we can only compare them unhappily with the poetry of *The Waste Land*.

"Gerontion," with its blemish, comes close to being one of Eliot's finer poems. The other two do not. We feel the pressure of a controlling malignity in these poems, where we feel the pressure of a helpless despair in *The Waste Land*. In *The Waste Land*, a desperate irony propels the lines. In "Burbank" and "Sweeney," by contrast, we feel the smaller category of sarcasm as the engine of the verse—in much the same way that Wallace Stevens's mildly anti-Semitic poem, "Winter

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Bells," exchanges his glassy rhetoric for a mean, swinging condescension.

In these poems ("Gerontion" excepted) the odor of light verse is merely smothered. And this is appropriate, for anti-Semitism is not mythic but vernacular: it belongs to, is owned first by, speech. Light verse is its home. In Stevens's poem, as in "Sweeney" and "Burbank," there is the tight gallop of light verse. The lines have a kind of rhythmic impudence, knowingly sealed in prejudice. Like Eliot, Stevens writes of "the Jew," that happily undefined definite article. Stevens's "Jew" prefers the trappings of Christianity and Gentile life:

> How good life is, on the basis of propriety,
> To be followed by a platter of capon!
>
> Yet he kept promising himself
> To go to Florida one of these days,
> And in one of the little arrondissements
> Of the sea there,
> To give this further thought.

Florida, thanks to the Jews, has its arrondissements, and no doubt its estaminets: it has been slyly Europeanized. This is the level of Stevens's poem, and indeed of Eliot's anti-Semitic poems—the level of the jibe. And the jibe necessitates its own bright rhythm.

But Eliot's great poetic revolution was rhythmic; this is something that neither his poetry nor his criticism allows us to forget. It is the rhythm of a modern neurosis, a mind chopped and failing. But it is simultaneously the deeper music of lamentation, the language sinking its roots down, as Eliot said it should, into the poetic moisture: "Here is no water but only rock/ Rock and no water and the sandy road/ The road winding above among the mountains/ Which are mountains of rock without water." There is a primitivism here, the primitivism of myth.

The inhabitants of *The Waste Land* are mythical. Bleistein, Burbank, Rachel are made smaller than us, for we are supposed to condescend to them; they issue out of cliché; but in *The Waste Land*, Madam Sosostris, Phlebas the Phoenician, even the woman in the pub, are enlarged. They include us, for their demise is ours:

> Gentile or Jew
> O you who turn the wheel and look to windward,
> Consider Phlebas, who was once handsome and tall as you.

The Waste Land is founded on the principle of enlargement. Blake, in his biblical epic poem *Jerusalem*, turned London into a city of impossible dreams, relishing the continuity and discontinuity between the world of biblical hugeness and the ordinariness, now radiant, of London's

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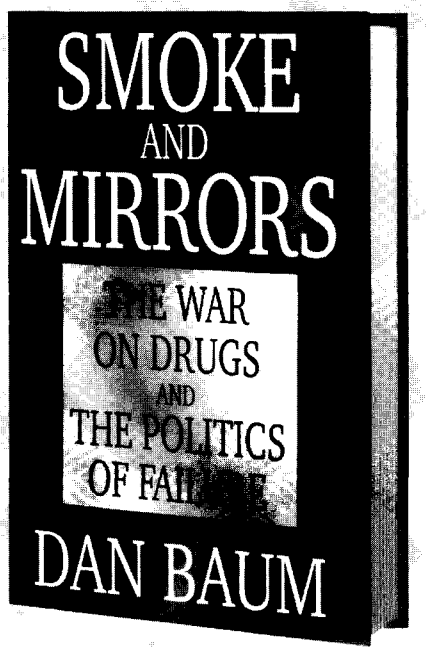

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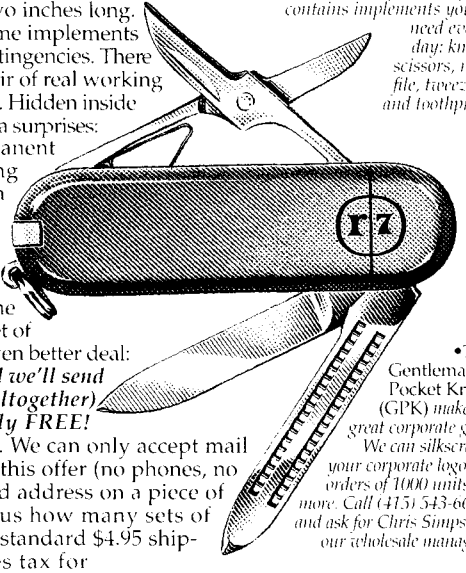

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place-names: "is that/ Mild Zion's hill's most ancient promontory, near mournful/Ever weeping Paddington?" Eliot learned much from Blake, and made London, as Blake did, larger than itself. London was not only London, but Dante's Florence, Baudelaire's Paris, and the Fisher King's sterile wastelands. Through allusion and counterpoint, London was lyricized—turned not only into Eliot's poetry, but into all of English poetry:

> And along the Strand, up Queen Victoria Street.
> O City city, I can sometimes hear
> Beside a public bar in Lower Thames Street,
> The pleasant whining of a mandoline

In *The Waste Land*, the banal—the young man carbuncular, the commuters crossing London Bridge—are at once condescended to and somehow pitied; for the stored pity of European poetry is brought to watch their ordinariness. And such people are pitied, unlike Bleistein or Rachel, because the poet pities himself, too:

> The awful daring of a moment's surrender
> Which an age of prudence can never retract
> By this, and this only, we have existed
> Which is not to be found in our obituaries
> Or in memories draped by the beneficent spider
> Or under seals broken by the lean solicitor
> In our empty rooms

Just as Eliot went down into the theological magma for his rock, so we feel here that he has descended, made one of those "rare descents" into despair about which he wrote in his essay on Matthew Arnold. What we bring back from those descents, said Eliot, is not "criticism." No, it is not criticism; and it is not disdain, and it is not condescension. It is the knowledge that far from the public rooms, far from the forms of life ("not to be found in our obituaries"), far from society itself with its cruelties, is a loneliness whose brutality is stronger than our powers, and it enforces on us gentleness, sympathy and control.

Here, at the end of *The Waste Land*, Eliot suggests a despair which cannot be renovated by the consoling verticalities of hierarchy and tradition. At the end of the poem, the thunder says three words in Sanskrit: "Datta. Dayadhvam. Damyata."—*Give. Sympathize. Control.* Eliot's anti-Semitic verse obeys only the last command of that austere triad. We cannot be certain that anti-Semitic poetry can never be great poetry. Our frail contemporary empiricism dares only that, on the evidence, it may not be. •

Big Little Big Horn

By James M. McPherson

The Controversial Life of George Armstrong Custer
by Jeffry D. Wert
(Simon & Schuster, 462 pp., $27.50)

With Custer on the Little Bighorn
by William O. Taylor
edited by Greg Martin
(Viking, 208 pp., $27.95)

More books and articles have been written about George Armstrong Custer than about any other American save Abraham Lincoln. Since 1909 Hollywood has made some fifty feature films about Custer or his "last stand" at Little Big Horn on June 25, 1876. Several times that number of novels and countless short stories have appeared since Custer and the 209 men with him in five companies of the 7th Cavalry died on that Montana hillside. A checklist compiled in 1969 classified nearly 1,000 pictorial depictions of the battle: paintings, book and magazine illustrations, lithographs, posters, cartoons and so on. Bibliographies compiled in the 1970s listed nearly 450 serious and substantial books about Custer; the "trivia or trash" account for thousands more. The legion of Custer buffs are quite right in their wry assertion that far more ink than blood has been spilled over the battle of Little Big Horn.

What explains this extraordinary phenomenon? The drama and mystery of a battle with no survivors has generated endless speculation and controversy. For half a century or more after the battle, many white Americans considered Custer a martyred hero and the battle a symbol of national pride comparable to other famous last-stand showdowns: Leonidas at Thermopylae, Roland at Roncesvalles, Gordon at Khartoum, Crockett at the Alamo. For the Sioux and Cheyenne Indians, Little Big Horn had a bittersweet quality: the most spectacular victory that they ever won against the white man's relentless advance, but also the beginning of the end of their free life on the Northern Plains. As awareness of and guilt about their historical treatment of Indians have grown among white Americans since the 1960s, Custer has become a symbol for all of this evil and his death at Little Big Horn an inverted crucifixion as expressed in the title of Vine Deloria's book *Custer Died for Your Sins* (1969).

The Custer Myth, as it is often styled, embraces these things and more. "Myth" does not necessarily mean a false story of the past; rather, it means a view of the world that embraces both truth and falsehood, an agreed-upon version of the past that becomes a lens through which an individual or a society view their world and try to make sense of it. For the history of white America's westward expansion, the Custer Myth has superbly served this purpose. Like all such myths, however, it has been hotly contested and constantly changing. Was Custer a martyr of manifest destiny or an agent of genocide? Did his flamboyant dress and personality clothe a charismatic leader or a vain egotist? Was he a courageous fighter and sound military tactician or an unstable glory hunter who sacrificed his men and himself to overweening ambition?

Answers to these questions often seem to depend more on the predilection of the respondent than on the reality of Custer. Few have ever been able to view Custer impartially. In his own time, peers and subordinates either revered him or despised him; few were neutral. Most historians, novelists, artists, filmmakers and other creators of the Custer Myth have similarly ranged on one side or the other. Only in recent years have several biographers and historians achieved a balanced perspective that has given us an historical Custer instead of a mythical Custer. The most recent such biographer is Jeffry Wert.

"Justification for another book about Custer seemingly strains credulity," writes Wert in his preface. What is the justification? Most Americans know Custer only as an Indian fighter who died in glory or vainglory at Little Big Horn. Some are aware that he fought in the Civil War, when he became known as the "Boy General" after promotion to brigadier general

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at the age of 23. Few are aware, however, of his distinguished and important accomplishments in the Civil War. As a staff officer during the first two years of the war and a cavalry brigade and division commander during the last two years, Custer participated in more than 100 skirmishes and battles. But far more has been written about his last battle, eleven years after the Civil War, than about all of the others put together. Jay Monaghan's *Custer: The Life of General George Armstrong Custer* (1959) partly redressed that imbalance by devoting half of his book to the Civil War years. And in *Custer Victorious: The Civil War Battles of General George Armstrong Custer* (1983), Gregory J. Urwin provided the fullest treatment we have of Custer's Civil War career. Yet the imbalance in popular understanding of Custer persists.

Jeffry Wert's biography treats Custer's life as a whole. "Understanding of the man and of the soldier requires inclusiveness," writes Wert. "He strides across both eras [the Civil War and the postwar decade], and both eras help to define him." Having written three previous books on the Civil War, Wert is on familiar ground in treating those years. Custer graduated from West Point last in his class in 1861, not because of academic deficiency but because he accumulated so many demerits that he was nearly expelled. Boyish, impulsive, full of energy, he loved practical jokes and pranks. These qualities made him popular among his fellow cadets and a leader of the clique that in any boys' school flouts the rules and defies authority.

Commissioned as a second lieutenant directly into the Union army on the eve of the first Battle of Bull Run, Custer grew up quickly in some respects; but in others he remained an eternal boy. Brash, fearless, aggressive, he seemed to regard war as a game. Combat was his *métier*. He had an instinctive grasp of terrain, an intuitive perception of enemy weaknesses and a sure sense of timing for launching or pressing home an attack. He was a natural leader whom men willingly followed.

As an officer on the staffs of several generals from 1861 to 1863, Custer frequently carried orders to subordinate commanders and in many cases led the unit to which he delivered the orders in carrying them out. Custer rose to captain in 1862 and became the most trusted officer on the staff of Major-General Alfred Pleasonton, commander of the cavalry corps in the Army of the Potomac, in early 1863. After Custer led successful charges in the battle of Brandy Station on June 9, 1863, and in a skirmish at Aldie, Virginia, eight days later (both part of the campaign that led to

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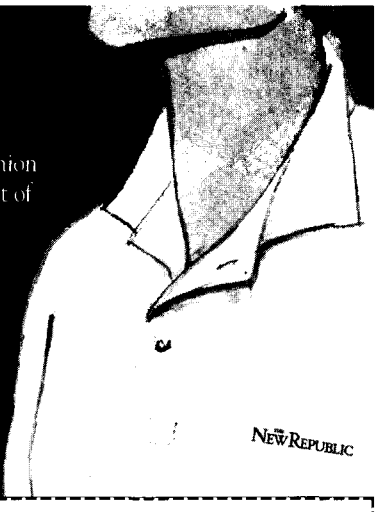

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Gettysburg), he was jumped to brigadier general and given command of a cavalry brigade on the eve of the battle of Gettysburg. This promotion was not quite as startling as it may appear, for Custer retained his rank as captain in the regular U.S. army while the brigadiership was his rank in the volunteer Union army. At Gettysburg Custer led part of his brigade on a hell-for-leather countercharge that helped break up a Confederate cavalry offensive that was timed to coincide with Pickett's infantry assault on July 3.

From Gettysburg through the end of the war, Custer's star continued to rise: to major general of volunteers, to command of a cavalry division. He played a key role in transforming the cavalry corps from the weakest arm of the service to the strongest by 1864. A sergeant in Custer's brigade fired the shot that mortally wounded Jeb Stuart, the fabled Confederate horse soldier, in the battle of Yellow Tavern on May 11, 1864. The new Union cavalry commander, Philip Sheridan, considered Custer his most valuable subordinate. The flair for combat seemed to run in the family; Custer's younger brother Tom won two congressional medals of honor while serving on his brother's staff.

At Appomattox it was Custer's division that blocked a further Confederate retreat westward until the infantry came up and closed Lee in a vise that compelled his surrender. After Grant had written out the terms of surrender on a table in Wilmer McLean's parlor, Sheridan bought the table and presented it to Custer's wife with a note: "There is scarcely an individual in our service who has contributed more to bring about this desirable result than your gallant husband."

The soldiers who fought under Custer agreed. Almost to the man they believed that he was "the best Cavalry General in the Army." A major in one of the Michigan regiments of Custer's brigade wrote that "We swear by him. He can get twice the fight out of this brigade than any other man can possibly do." Wert's analysis of Custer's Civil War record sustains this view. "He attained a combat record as a cavalry officer nearly unmatched," writes Wert. "If his military career had ended on the ridge near Appomattox Court House, he would be remembered as one of the country's finest horse soldiers."

But of course Custer's career did not end at Appomattox. And the manner of its ending at Little Big Horn caused many to remember Custer as one of the country's worst military blunderers. That is the great mystery that generations of historians have tried to unravel: How did the Custer of Appomattox become the Custer of Little Big Horn? Encapsulated within that question is another: How did Custer, whose subordinates during the Civil War almost universally idolized him, become such an instrument of polarization within his postwar regiment, with one faction hating him and the other (including his brother and a brother-in-law) loving him?

No historian has satisfactorily answered these questions. Nor does Wert. Perhaps they cannot be answered. But we can chip away at the edges of an answer. With the demobilization of the Union volunteer army, Custer reverted to his regular army rank of captain. Anticipating that chances for promotion in the peacetime army would be scarce, the ever-ambitious Custer considered resigning and began to explore business opportunities. In July 1866, however, Congress authorized four new regular-army cavalry regiments, and on the strength of his wartime record Custer was offered the lieutenant-colonelcy of the 7th Cavalry. He accepted. Since the colonel was usually away on detached duty, Custer in effect commanded the regiment. He tried to mold it to his own personality.

Perhaps that was where the trouble began, for the "brashness and flair" that had served Custer well in a big war tended to become arrogance and showmanship in the small world of a regiment whose principal duty for the next decade would be chasing Indians on the frontier of white settlement. Custer's personality rubbed several of his subordinate officers the wrong way, principally Major Marcus Reno and Captain Frederick Benteen. Their hostility would have controversial consequences at Little Big Horn.

In contrast with the highly motivated volunteer soldiers of the Civil War cavalry, who were recruited from all classes of society, the enlisted men in postwar regiments came mostly from the working class, many of them immigrants. They had a high rate of desertion on the bleak, dusty plains of Kansas and Dakota territory. To keep them in line, Custer felt compelled to become a harsh disciplinarian. Many of his troopers came to hate him for what they considered his petty tyranny. The 7th Cavalry may not have been riven by more dissension and factionalism than other postwar regiments, but owing to Custer's fame, and to what happened at Little Big Horn, the harsh light of history has focused more on its problems.

Custer's record as an Indian fighter was mixed. On one occasion he was court-martialed and suspended for a year for leaving his command without orders to rejoin his wife because he feared for her safety amid hostile Indians in Kansas. Custer's most decisive victory in an Indian battle, over the Southern Cheyenne at Washita in present-day Oklahoma, generated great controversy then and since, because Indian women and children were among those killed in the attack. Wert absolves Custer and his troopers from the charge of massacre. Like other recent scholars, he notes that in a dawn attack on a village containing noncombatants as well as warriors, some of the former will become casualties in the confusion. Custer personally prevented the purposeful slaughter of women and children.

In 1873, the 7th Cavalry was posted to Fort Lincoln in Dakota Territory. Under the Treaty of Fort Laramie in 1868, most of the Sioux had located on a large reservation comprising the western part of present-day South Dakota, including the Black Hills. As usual with Indian treaties, this land was granted to them "as long as the waters shall run and the grass shall grow." And as usual, whites began to violate their own treaty. In 1875, survey crews for the Northern Pacific Railroad, protected by the 7th Cavalry, moved through Sioux territory, presaging the destruction of the northern buffalo herd as other railroads had already decimated the southern herd. In 1874, another government expedition protected by the 7th confirmed the existence of gold in the Black Hills. Prospectors clamored for entry.

Custer's own attitude toward Indians was ambivalent. Some of his writings portray them as a wronged people heroically defending their rights; others describe them as cruel savages. In any event, Custer saw himself as an instrument of government policy and as an Indian fighter determined to end red resistance to the white tide of settlement. When the Sioux refused to sell the Black Hills, the government stopped restraining prospectors and ordered the "hostiles" to come in from eastern Montana to the Dakota agencies or suffer the consequences.

Not only did they refuse, but in the spring of 1876 many reservation Indians also left to join Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse and other hostile chiefs in the buffalo country of Montana. Custer's 7th Cavalry was part of a three-pronged campaign by the army to hem in these bands and destroy their power once and for all. This was the setting into which Custer led 263 men of the 7th Cavalry to their deaths on June 25, 1876, including all 210 in the five companies under Custer's personal command.

Numerous and contentious disputes still swirl around the questions of re-

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sponsibility for what happened at Little Big Horn. Wert offers a careful and balanced appraisal. Custer undeniably committed tactical errors, especially the division of his regiment into three parts in the face of what turned out to be vastly superior numbers. With fewer than 600 troopers he attacked a huge encampment containing at least 2,000 warriors. But the radical underestimation of Indian numbers was not entirely Custer's fault. Nor did he disobey orders by attacking without waiting for the arrival of other cavalry and infantry. His superior officer, General Alfred Terry, had given Custer discretionary orders to attack rather than let the "hostiles" slip away, which was the army's greatest fear.

On the endlessly debated question of whether Reno and Benteen, commanders of the two detached parts of the 7th, were culpable in failing to come to Custer's aid, Wert carefully and guardedly concludes that they were. "At best," he writes, Reno "saved most of his command from certain annihilation; at worst, he was either a coward or drunk on the battlefield." As for Benteen, "judged by the rigors of duty, the standards of conduct, orders, and the situation, Benteen failed Custer and the regiment."

The recently discovered memoir by William O. Taylor, a private in the 7th Cavalry who fought with Reno's detachment, provides both support for and dissent from these conclusions. Taylor, who wrote his account in 1917, vividly recalled seeing Reno take a swig of whiskey during the fight. But he praised Benteen as a superb combat leader who organized an effective defense by the seven companies with Reno and Benteen against repeated attacks on June 26 by the warriors who had wiped out Custer's command three miles away the day before—an event of which the Reno-Benteen companies remained unaware until after the fighting was over.

The echoes of Little Big Horn have not ceased to reverberate. Perhaps they never will. Those brief hours carry too heavy a freight of myth, symbol and guilt about the mission and the meaning of America for even such a well-researched and meticulous biography as Wert's to resolve. If Custer did indeed die for our sins, we will debate the nature of those sins "as long as the waters shall run and the grass shall grow."

JAMES M. MCPHERSON is a professor of history at Princeton University and the author most recently of *Drawn with the Sword: Reflections on the American Civil War* (Oxford University Press).

TRB *continued from page 6*

man has raised interest rates whenever the economy has threatened to grow faster than an anemic 2.5 percent. He is expected to begin raising them again next month to slow the economy and to prevent labor shortages from driving up wages and then prices.

Then there are structural obstacles to prolonging the recovery. If the U.S. follows a stimulative strategy unilaterally, without getting other industrial countries to cooperate, it could threaten the dollar—either as capital flows out of the U.S. toward higher interest rates overseas or as greater consumer demand in the U.S. increases imports and the trade deficit. To defend the dollar, the U.S. would eventually have to raise interest rates.

Then there is the peculiar U.S.-Japan relationship, which Clinton has failed to alter. Secretary Rubin might have already doomed the current recovery when he agreed last year to a Japanese strategy of forcing up the value of the dollar in relation to the yen. By increasing purchases of American Treasury bills, the Japanese have helped keep down American interest rates in an election year, but in the long term, it will have exactly the opposite effect. The dollar's rise is worsening America's terms of trade with Japan and Asia, ensuring that the already large trade deficit with Asia will grow. This will weaken the dollar and create a rationale for jacking up interest rates. If Clinton wins, the Republicans, pointing to the trade deficit, may soon be decrying the economy as "the weakest in a generation."

Clinton had the right idea in 1992. The government can't prevent recessions, but it may be able to do something about inequality. In that campaign, Clinton advocated measures designed to improve the competitiveness of American workers and to reduce downward pressures on wages from runaway shops at home and unfair trade abroad. Some of these measures made a lot of sense—like requiring businesses to set aside worker retraining funds and crafting trade agreements that discouraged American companies from moving abroad in search of cheap labor. Facing opposition from business, Clinton abandoned these efforts. Republicans in Congress blocked others, although finally relenting on the minimum wage. Now, running as a miracle-worker, he has largely abandoned any recognition of the economic problem these measures were meant to address. For America's downwardly mobile middle class, Clinton's new morning, like Reagan's, may prove to be yet another false dawn.

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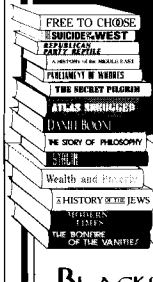

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I am a footnote

UPON RECEIVING HIS AUTOgraphed copy of *The Unmaking of a Mayor,* William Buckley's memoir of his 1965 campaign for mayor of New York, Norman Mailer immediately went to the index and looked up his own name. There he found, in Buckley's own handwriting, "Hi, Norman." I confess: I, too, look myself up in likely books. Is it grandiosity? Or insecurity? I looked myself up, on a long shot, in Edmund Wilson's posthumously published journal, *The Sixties.* There, on page 455, I found, "After lunch, I made the rounds of Cambridge—ran into, as usually happens, familiar characters in Harvard Square: Peretz, [Richard] Pipes and the man in the Russian department who had Mirsky's book on Pushkin reprinted." Not much of a reference, but a mention! It turns out that Wilson, perhaps the most learned American literary critic ever, the author of thirty books and sometime literary editor of TNR, was himself a bit insecure. "It cheered me up to feel," he wrote, "that they were glad to see me."

I CAN'T SAY I'M CHEERED EVERY time I find myself cited in a book. Were I left out of some books, though, I'd be quite disappointed, mostly in myself. I have in mind (and in hand) a heavy volume by Edward Said in which he calls me, along with Michael Walzer and Irving Howe, a liar. Now, coming from someone with his problematic relationship to facts (and to truth, more generally), this is actually quite gratifying. As are the scattered epithets of Noam Chomsky, in God-only-knows how many published writings, calling me much worse.

THERE IS NO ONE I HAVE KNOWN who had a more problematic relationship with the truth than Lillian Hellman. Anyone writing about her had, thus, to deal with the elaborate and inconsistent legends she contrived for herself. But, in the highly ideological '60s and '70s, not many were inclined to ask her about the obvious contradictions or to question her public self-portrait as a heroine. I knew her during those decades, and in the beginning was myself protective of the mythology. In fact, when Alfred Kazin wrote a demolition for this magazine of her contemptibly false memoir of the McCarthy era, *Scoundrel Time,* I found some specious reason to turn it down. I did this even though Lillian and I had already had long and heated quarrels, beginning with her demeaningly anti-Semitic play, *My Mother, My Father and Me,* which should have closed in Boston but went on to flop in New York. These quarrels became increasingly intense over Israel. She rightly saw that Zionism was the antithesis of communism, to whose cruelties she was loyal till the end, and she couldn't forgive Zionists their heresy. Our relationship came to a nasty end when I, then chairman of The Jerusalem Foundation, hosted a party with Roy Cohn to raise money from some of his friends for a soccer field that would be strategically placed midway between a Jewish and an Arab neighborhood in the city. The news hit *The New York Post,* and Lillian went haywire. She phoned and screamed at me, "Fascism ... Dashiell Hammett ... Un-American Activities ... immoral ... disgusting" etc. Seeing that I could not stop the torrents, I conceded, "Yes, I did socialize with Roy Cohn. But at least I never socialized with Stalin." At which point she hung up the phone. We never spoke again.

THIS TALE IS TOLD ACCURATELY in Joan Mellen's remarkable new joint biography, *Hellman and Hammett.* Mellen is a relentless sleuth, and she has even found that some of Lillian's assertions may actually have been true. But not many. Hellman's undoing came when Mary McCarthy said of her "that every word she writes is a lie including 'and' and 'the.' " Hellman sued McCarthy for slander, seeking $2.25 million in damages. But Lillian had uttered so many valent lies in her life that she could not possibly have won. The lie foremost in everyone's head was the ambitious one about "Julia." Julia first appeared in a volume of autobiography, *Pentimento,* as a wealthy friend of Lillian's, an activist in the anti-Nazi underground in Vienna. Lillian smuggles money to her, and they make promises to each other if things go wrong, Lillian to Julia about Julia's child, Julia to Lillian about her money. Who was Julia? Actually, Lillian had filched her from the life of a psychiatrist, Muriel Gardner, whom she did not know. But, Mellen writes, Lillian had told one Blair Clark (a paramour of her imaginings) and Ephraim London, her lawyer, that Julia's last name was "Clark." But Julia was not of Blair Clark's family. She came, Lillian insisted, from Anne Peretz's Clark family—my wife's family—and that Anne had inherited some money intended for Hellman. As it happens, the only Clark woman to fit Julia's age was Anne's mother. Lillian's fantasy life about Anne, whom she probably liked (and about me, whom she didn't) was, then, not just preposterous. It was also pathological. And life, as this book shows, is rarely pathological in one instance only.

READING A SCHOLAR'S VIEW OF one's role in historical developments can be chastening. Ronald Radosh's *Divided They Fell,* a book about the decline of the Democratic Party over the last three decades, certainly chastens me. I dart in and out of its pages, first as an anti-war and civil rights activist and latterly as a critic of the activism's ultimate influence on the party. Fact is, I was none too wise in those heady early years, not aware enough of the fragility of the good in our society and not aware enough also of the resilience of the callous in it. So this was a painful read. To be sure, I thought of myself as a moderate even then. But the great historian of Communist Russia, Adam Ulam, my thesis supervisor, said at the time that I was "on the extreme right of the extreme left," and maybe he was correct. In any case, Radosh has written a completely fresh narrative and its corollary, a fresh analysis, as well.

HARVARD MEMOIRS ARE DISPIRITing affairs, the writer's Cambridge years usually emerging as the high point of his life. To be published in the winter (I've just read it in manuscript), *Mere Anarchy,* Roger Rosenblatt's book about Harvard in the spring of 1969, the time of the famous "bust" after student radicals seized University Hall, is not one of these nostalgic enterprises. Roger and I were young faculty colleagues at the time and, though we agreed on almost every issue that divided Harvard in those days, we drew apart, mostly on account of the narcissism of small differences. Nonetheless, I am in his *dramatis personae,* and not unkindly, although, again, I cringed at how smug I seem, at least to myself. I am still haunted by one of my students who'd come to college as a young Goldwaterite and ended his freshman year in the Cambridge lock-up. These days, when almost everyone seems to be a moderate, it is hard to convey the tense atmosphere of siege that suffused university life. But Rosenblatt does it by attention to long-forgotten significant detail and by devastating portraits of important intellectuals playing out fantasies of revolution, and of repression.

MARTIN PERETZ

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Where We Stand

By Albert Shanker, President
American Federation of Teachers

A False Economy

Should the children of illegal immigrants be turned away from public schools? Unless a controversial amendment to the new federal immigration bill is stripped out before the bill becomes law, that is exactly what states will be permitted to do.

You can't blame the states for feeling frustrated. The federal government has not controlled illegal immigration, and the states have been stuck with paying for the services illegal immigrants use. But denying their children an education is no way to solve the problem. For one thing, it is probably unconstitutional. A similar Texas law was overturned by the Supreme Court in 1982, and a California law, which passed in 1994, has never been implemented and is currently mired in the courts.

If kids aren't educated in school, they'll be educated on the streets.

There's no question that adults who are undocumented aliens should be held accountable. But is it fair to make their children pay? They did not choose to break the law, and they can't go back home on their own. As the 1982 Supreme Court decision put it, punishing the children of illegal aliens for the wrongdoing of their parents is grossly unfair—it "does not comport with the fundamental conceptions of justice."

It is also unlikely to be effective. The amendment says that allowing undocumented kids to attend U.S. schools "promotes violations," but this is ridiculous. Does a Mexican worker leave the village where he was born and undertake a journey that is difficult and dangerous simply to enroll his kid in kindergarten in L.A.? These parents don't come here to take advantage of U.S. schools; they come to get jobs. Refusing to educate the kids will not make a dent in the number of illegal aliens entering the country, and it won't make the ones who are here pack up and go home. As a deterrent, it is worthless.

Supporters of the amendment admit there are problems, but they say that the biggest problem is the cost of educating the children of illegal aliens. However, the cost of not educating these children is even greater. Even if they never become citizens, they are likely to remain in this country—probably in the states and cities where they now live. The 1982 Supreme Court decision talks about the price children themselves will pay if they are denied an education: "The inability to read and write will handicap the individual deprived of basic education each and every day of his life." It also points out that the cost is passed on to the rest of us:

> By denying these children a basic education, we...foreclose any realistic possibility that they will contribute in even the smallest way to the progress of our Nation. It is difficult to understand precisely what the State hopes to achieve by promoting the creation and perpetuation of a subclass of illiterates within our boundaries, surely adding to the problems and costs of unemployment, welfare, and crime....[W]hatever savings might be achieved by denying these children an education, they are wholly insubstantial in light of the costs involved to these children, the State and the Nation.

These sentiments are being echoed today by a large number of people—Republicans as well as Democrats. Although Robert Dole strongly favors the amendment refusing these children an education (he was on the other side in 1982), other prominent Republicans such as Senators Orrin Hatch and Alan Simpson, Mayor Rudolph Guiliani, Governor George W. Bush, and former President George Bush say it is unwise and wrong. So do many law enforcement officials. If kids aren't educated in school, they'll be educated on the streets, where they will become victims or victimizers—and in many cases permanent charges on society. An article in the *Wall Street Journal* ("The Cops' View: Don't Close School to Illegal Aliens," June 26, 1996) quotes Dade County, Florida, police chief Donald Warshaw, who says, "If you're a street juvenile with no direction...your whole morality is going to be based on what you learn on the streets. That's going to drive you to the commission of minor crimes, leading to the commission of major crimes."

If we are really serious about discouraging illegal immigration, a good way of doing it would be to issue ID cards showing that people are entitled to work. But this kind of proposal never gets anywhere because too many employers depend on the cheap labor that illegal immigrants provide. Supporting an amendment to refuse undocumented kids an education doesn't cost these people anything—at least not now—and it gives the impression that they are tough on illegal immigration.

The Supreme Court got it right in 1982. Fairness, common sense—and cost-benefit analysis—all tell us that it is wrong to deny the children of undocumented aliens a free public education. One way or another, most of them will be participants in our society. It is up to us to decide what kind of participants they will be.

Mr. Shanker's comments appear in this ad under the auspices of the American Federation of Teachers. Reader correspondence is invited. Address your letters to Mr. Shanker at the AFT, 555 New Jersey Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20001. © 1996 by Albert Shanker.

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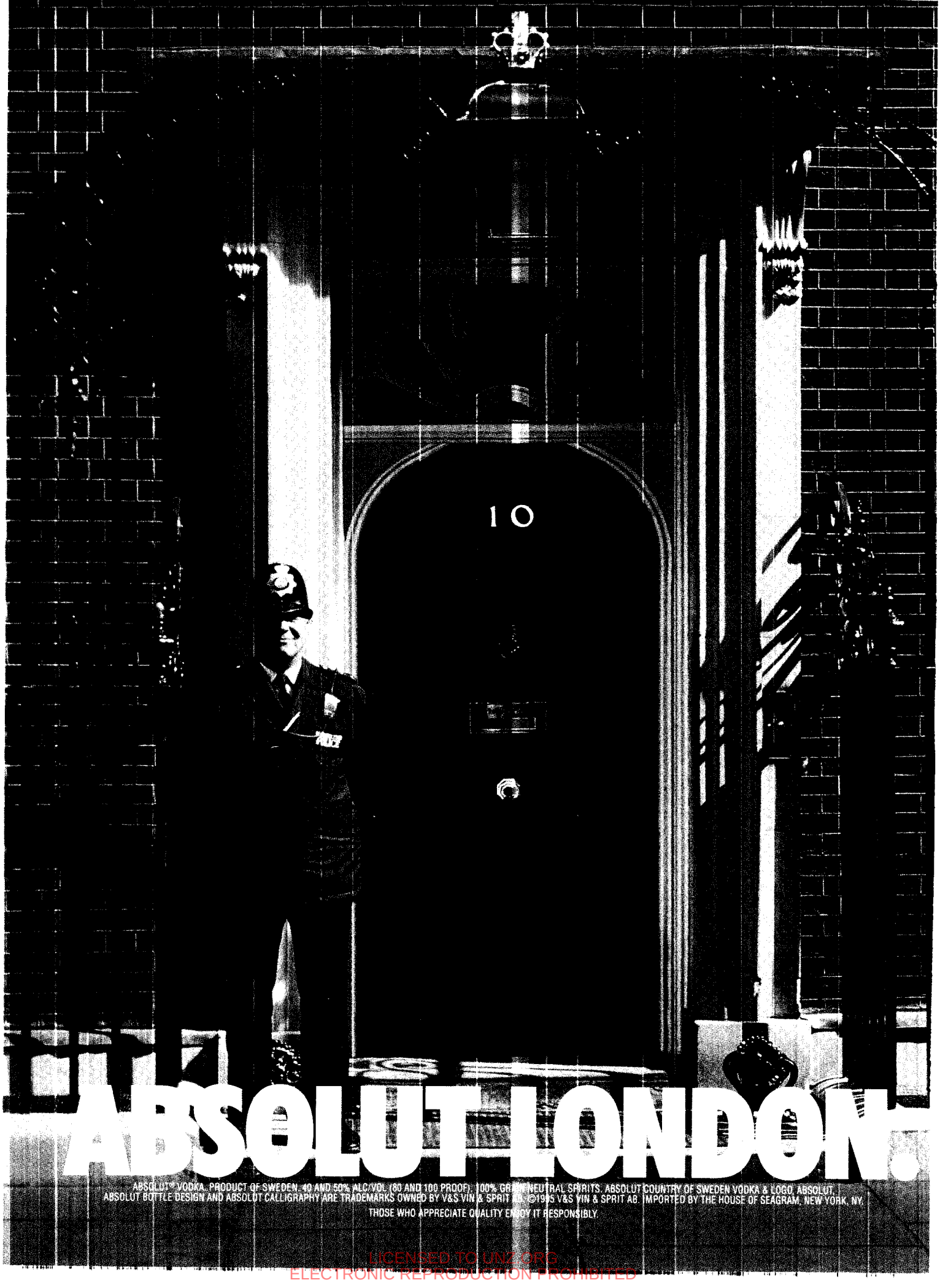

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